

Morning Prayer

Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ: Christmas Day

December 25, 2023

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=ei94MEdsMUh6clV6b2dUblFOQ3I2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 858 8794 6777

Passcode: 782611

Prelude

Entrance Hymn

As announced

All remain standing as they are able.

Opening Sentence

The Presider says

Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. *Luke 2:10, 11*

Confession of Sin

The Presider says to the people

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of the Holy One, 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.

All then kneel as they are able.

Silence is kept.

Presider and People

God of all mercy,
**we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.**

**We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.**

The Presider stands and says

Fear not, sisters and brothers: God, who is full of grace and abounding in steadfast love, meets us in our sin and transforms us for God's glory and the healing of God's world.
✠ Our sins are forgiven; let us be now at peace. **Amen.**

All stand as they are able.

The Invitatory and Psalter

Presider Lord, open our lips.

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

Presider and People

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.

Alleluia. To us a child is born:
Come let us adore him. Alleluia.

Invitatory

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!**

Psalm 97

to be prayed responsively

- ¹The LORD is King;
let the earth rejoice; *
let the multitude of the isles be glad.
- ²**Clouds and darkness are round about him, *
righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne.**
- ³A fire goes before him *
and burns up his enemies on every side.
- ⁴**His lightnings light up the world; *
the earth sees it and is afraid.**
- ⁵The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD, *
at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
- ⁶**The heavens declare his righteousness, *
and all the peoples see his glory.**
- ⁷Confounded be all who worship carved images
and delight in false gods! *
Bow down before him, all you gods.
- ⁸**Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, *
because of your judgments, O LORD.**
- ⁹For you are the LORD,
most high over all the earth; *
you are exalted far above all gods.
- ¹⁰**The LORD loves those who hate evil; *
he preserves the lives of his saints
and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.**
- ¹¹Light has sprung up for the righteous, *
and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted.
- ¹²**Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, *
and give thanks to his holy Name.**

**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.**

All sit.

The Lessons

First Reading

Isaiah 62:6-12

A Reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

⁶Upon your walls, O Jerusalem,
I have posted sentinels;
all day and all night
they shall never be silent.
You who remind the LORD,
take no rest,
⁷and give him no rest
until he establishes Jerusalem
and makes it renowned throughout the earth.
⁸The LORD has sworn by his right hand
and by his mighty arm:
I will not again give your grain
to be food for your enemies,
and foreigners shall not drink the wine
for which you have labored;
⁹but those who garner it shall eat it
and praise the LORD,
and those who gather it shall drink it
in my holy courts.

¹⁰Go through, go through the gates,
prepare the way for the people;
build up, build up the highway,
clear it of stones,
lift up an ensign over the peoples.

¹¹The LORD has proclaimed
to the end of the earth:
Say to daughter Zion,
“See, your salvation comes;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.”

¹²They shall be called, “The Holy People,
The Redeemed of the LORD”;
and you shall be called, “Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.”

<i>Reader</i>	The Word of the Lord.
<i>People</i>	Thanks be to God.

Remain seated.

Canticle 16

to be prayed responsively

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

Titus 3:4-7

A Reading from Paul's letter to Titus.

⁴When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. ⁶This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

All stand as they are able.

Hymn

As announced

The people then are seated.

Third Reading

Luke 2:1--20

A Reading from Luke.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When 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." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.



Here ends the Reading.

Homily

Bill Stech

All stand as they are able.

The Apostles' Creed

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.

All remain standing as they are able.

The Prayers

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

The Presider and the People

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.**

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

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.**

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 Collect for Peace

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Prayer for Mission

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The people may then remain standing, or kneel as they are able

Intercessions and Thanksgivings

Presider The Lord God is both sun and shield; God will give grace and glory. In the house of our God, let us pray, “Lord God of hosts, hear our prayer.”

Intercessor We give thanks for your Church, O God. Bless our Bishops Bonnie, Michael, Justin, Elizabeth, Donald and Craig. We remember all ministers, priests, deacons, ministry teams, and all the members of Christ’s body. Bless it with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. May we be made happy in the knowledge of the hope to which we are called. Lord God of hosts, **Hear our prayer.**

Silence is kept.

We give thanks for this nation, O God. Give to our leaders a spirit of wisdom. Deliver them from selfish ambition and give all the people a heart for your children, especially those little ones born into poverty. Lord God of hosts, **Hear our prayer.**

Silence is kept.

We give thanks for your creation, O God. Where there is desolation, bring forth springs of clean water. Where your creatures are without a place, may they find a place with you. Lord God of hosts, **Hear our prayer.**

Silence is kept.

We give thanks for this city, O God. Set us on a straight path where we shall not stumble. Bring new life to languishing areas. Lord God of hosts, **Hear our prayer.**

Silence is kept.

We give thanks for all the blessings of this life [especially_____]. Lord God of hosts, **Hear our prayer.**

Silence is kept.

We give thanks for all those in our lives, O God. We pray especially for those who know weeping and tears [especially_____ and any others you wish to name now]. Turn their mourning into joy, comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow. Lord God of hosts, **Hear our prayer.**

Silence is kept.

We give thanks for the saints at rest, O God [especially_____ and any others you wish to name now]. Gather them into your great heavenly company. May they enjoy forever the riches of your glorious inheritance among the saints. Lord God of hosts, **Hear our prayer.**

Silence is kept.

Presider Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born this day of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Hymn

As announced

Offertory

The people stand as they are able when the offerings are presented and placed on the Altar.

Offertory Hymn

Doxology

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

The people remain standing as they are able

The General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
**we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.**

We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. 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.

Closing Hymn

As announced

Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The grace + of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.

Postlude

+++++

Thanks to Chelsea Stech for serving as the Musician for this service!

Faith in Action provides leadership in collecting donations of food to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas. They are in need of our continuing help in these days of

high food costs. 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. If you write a check, please make it to *Faith In Action*. The **next Food In-Gathering is January 21**. Please contribute as generously as you can.

+++++

Upcoming Commemorations

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Dec. 25 | The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ: Christmas Day |
| 26 | Stephen, Deacon and Martyr; and, Desmond Tutu, Bishop, 2021 |
| 27 | John the Apostle |
| 28 | The Holy Innocents |
| 29 | Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury and Martyr, 1170 |

+++++



Christmas Day II: December 25, 2020

Isaiah 62:6-12; Psalm 97; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20

Dear people of God - Happy Christmas! After a long Advent, here we are - hearing the well-worn story of Jesus coming into the world.

Hearing, again, the hope of the light which breaks into the least likely of places. And, no matter how many times we hear it - no matter how many Christmas services we attend - this is always news we need to hear. And it is always good.

This year, perhaps more than any other, we need to hear about the way the light comes in. We need to hear that darkness doesn't have the final word. We need to hear about this Son of God, this piece of Divinity who enters into the mess of a stable, just to remind us that we do not walk alone.

This year more than others has probably felt like an extended Advent - or even like Lent. As we've traveled through a pandemic, we have been profoundly together - and yet kept a physical distance. We have all been affected, and yet we know that our own disparities in race and class have been brought to the surface. We have been in something that probably feels more like a season of waiting, minding the dark, and reminding one another of God's goodness. This Christmas Day, we come out of that darkness - we come out of the waiting - and we celebrate.

Each year, it seems that there is a different part of the story that demands our attention. Perhaps this year, it is the shepherds. The shepherds are likely the most modest of all the characters in our story. In Christmas pageants, there are those who wish to be angels, and wise men, and of course Mary and Joseph. Even the innkeeper stands alone, given an important role of turning the family away. But this group, the shepherds and their animals, is often the least popular. Their grouping means no single one is more important than another. We don't know their names or their origins. It can be easy to

assume they are passive in the story - told news by the angels and then left, consigned to be on the outside of the action.

This year, let us be drawn to these humble ones. We've just been through a national election - which, no matter what side of the political spectrum you fall on, or what your personal feelings may be, has been stressful. We've been through and are still living with a global pandemic - likely the first in our lifetimes. Our world has been noisy. It's been full of individual characters yelling to get attention. Our hearts yearn for humble ones like these shepherds - quietly minding their own business when the angels surround them.

Can you imagine it? This is the moment which shows us the absolute beauty of God - the paradox of a supreme being, of one who is known simply as, I AM, deciding to announce the birth of Godself into the world by going into the field and finding these shepherds.

The angels could have gone into the city. They could have gone to the town square, or to the houses of the rich and famous. I'm sure they could have announced to many more people, much more efficiently, that Jesus was born.

And yet, God sends word first to the humble. To those out in the field, probably smelling from a day - a week - a month - of tending their animals. God's word comes down into a field, announcing the light in the world to a small, inconspicuous group.

And, the announcement is anything but simple. It begins with one angel - singing the glory of the Lord and telling them not to be afraid. After the good news is announced, there is suddenly with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God in word and song. What an elaborate and unexpected announcement!

The next part of the story gets glossed over. Sometimes we focus on the way that God comes to those whom society deems least worthy, but rarely do we look at the response of the shepherds. They have been terrified in the field - suddenly surrounded by angels and a multitude of the heavenly host - and yet, despite their fear, they decide to go to Bethlehem, to see the baby the angels announced to them.

In our gospels, we aren't given the text of that conversation. We don't know if one of them wants to go and has to talk the others into it - or if they come to a consensus. Perhaps there is no need for conversation - all their hearts having been transformed in their interaction, and all ready, now, to go.

How do we respond, when we're given invitations from God? It would be unusual for any one of us to have experienced a multitude of the heavenly host announcing to us the birth of the Messiah - but we receive invitations all the time. Invitations to follow, to come, and see - invitations to step deeper into relationship with our neighbors, to practice blessing our enemies, to spend time with God. How do we respond to those invitations?

In the shepherds' response, going to Bethlehem and visiting Mary, the effect of the angel visit is multiplied. They tell all who will listen about the baby they have seen, and speak words that are, to Mary, so important that she treasures and ponders them in her heart.

The shepherds call to us. They remind us that the invitations God sends us are always to be multiplied, and increased, and shared. These unassuming men, sitting in the

fields and minding their sheep, are suddenly surrounded by an angelic light. The birth of the Savior is announced to them, and their hearts are transformed.

This year, as we again visit the well-worn fabric of this story, I invite you to pay attention to the less showy thread. Allow the shepherds, these background characters, to teach you something new about who God is, and to whom God pays attention. Allow them to speak to you about transformation and increasing joy. This year, we remember - God sees these humble ones, and gives them a voice, a role in the story of light breaking through the darkness. And, if God sees and uses even the shepherds - then surely God sees you and me, too. Amen.

- 1. With whom do you identify when you read the Christmas story? Pick two characters and write a paragraph below describing how each is feeling throughout the story.*

- 2. Ask someone – in person or over the phone or over the Internet – to read Luke 2:1-20 to you. Close your eyes and resist the temptation to follow the text in a book. What do you hear anew from this well-worn story? Write a sentence below that has new or amplified meaning for you this year.*

This study written by the Rev. Jazzy Bostock.

+++++

Service text from riteplanning.com. Copyright © 2022 Church Publishing Inc. All rights reserved.



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

20500 W Old US-12

Chelsea MI 48118

stbarnabaschelsea.org