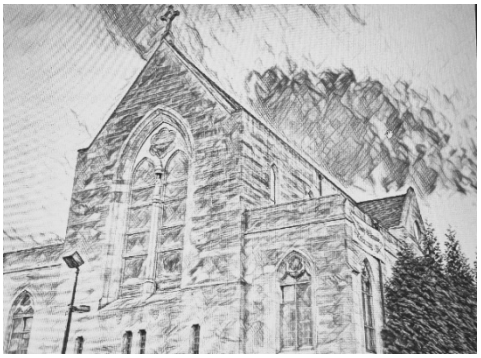
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Canton, Ohio

Christmas Eve
The Nativity of our Lord, Jesus Christ
Dec. 24, 2025
Music at 7:30 p.m.
Service begins at 8 p.m.

Welcome to St. Paul's

Online and in-person services begin with music at 7:30 p.m.



St. Paul's Episcopal Church
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Canton OH 44702
(330) 455-0286

Website: www.stpaulscanton.org
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/stpaulscanton
e-mail: stpaulsoffice@att.net
We're on YouTube: StPaulsCanton

Our mission

St. Paul's is an exceptionally welcoming Episcopal community in downtown Canton, grounded in faith, and called by God's Love to minister to the world.

Feast of the Nativity, Christmas Eve
Holy Eucharist
Celebrants: The Revs. Joe and Kay Ashby

Readings and Psalm

- Isaiah 9:2-7
- Psalm 96
- Titus 2:11-14
- Luke 2:1-14

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The music of Christmas Eve

Choir offering beginning at 7:30 p.m.

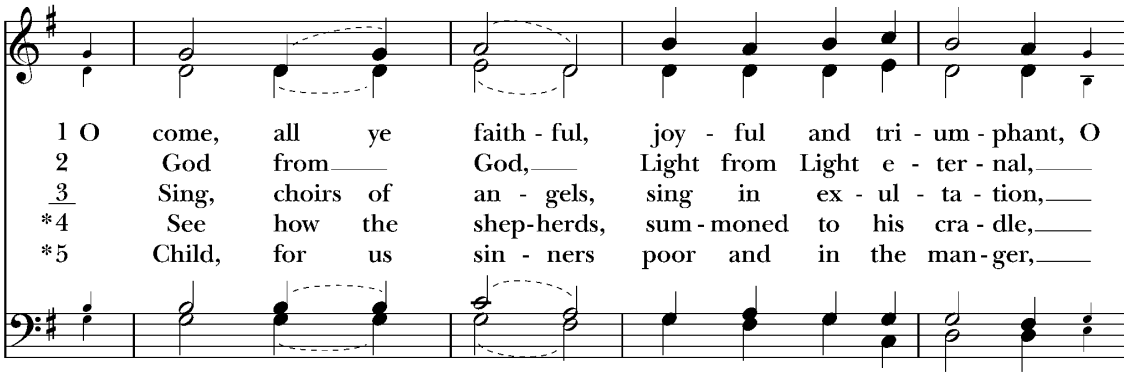
Noel I, Louis-Claude Daquin
The Holly and the Ivy, David Ogden
Lullaby of Jesus, Grayston Ives
Noel III, Louis-Claude Daquin
Dans cette étable, Piers Maxim
*Gaudet*e, Barbara Rusbridge
Noel VI, Louis-Claude Daquin

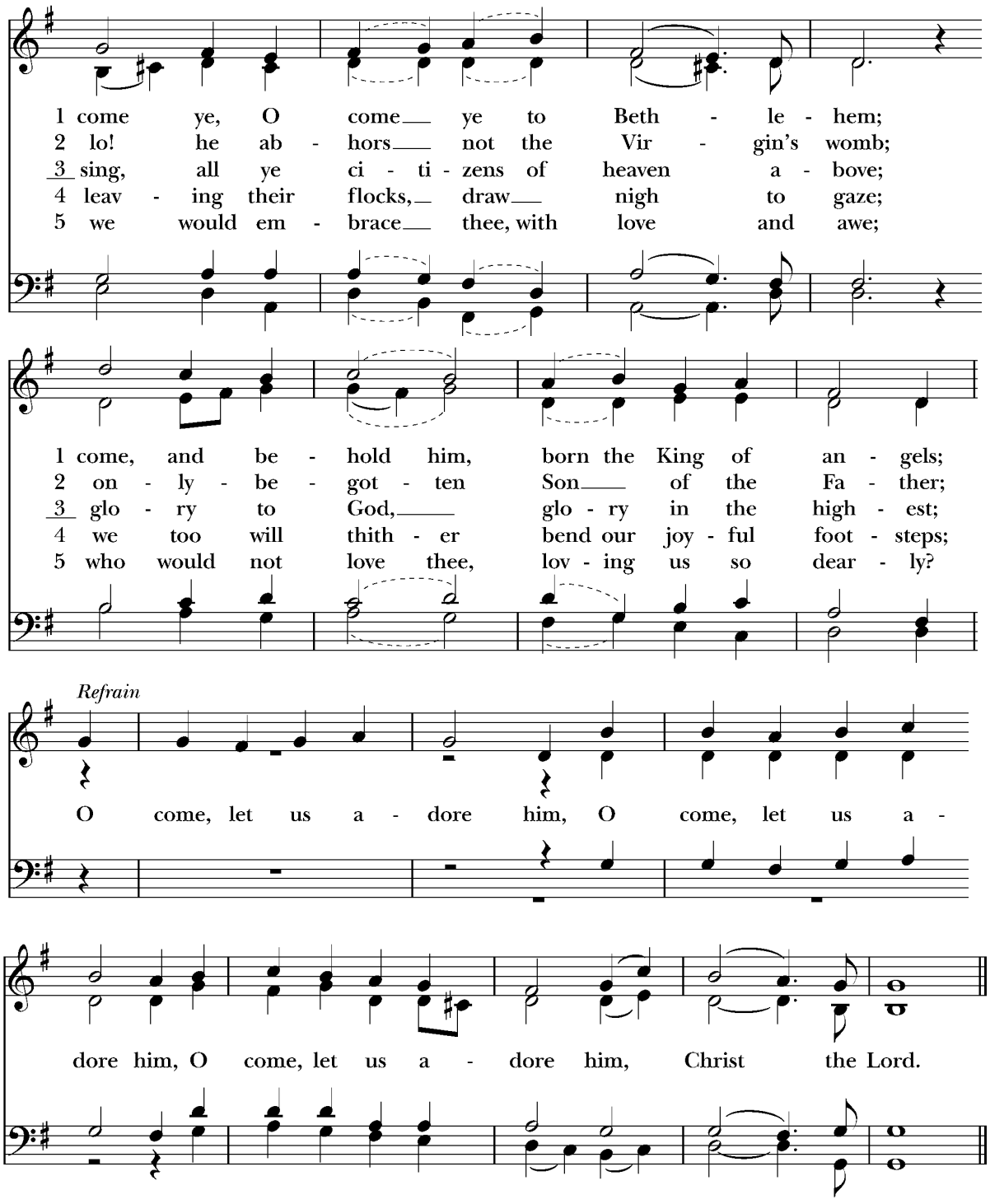
The Word of God

Entrance Rite

Please stand in body or spirit

***Entrance Hymn: O Come, All ye Faithful Adeste fideles* (H83)**





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

Refrain

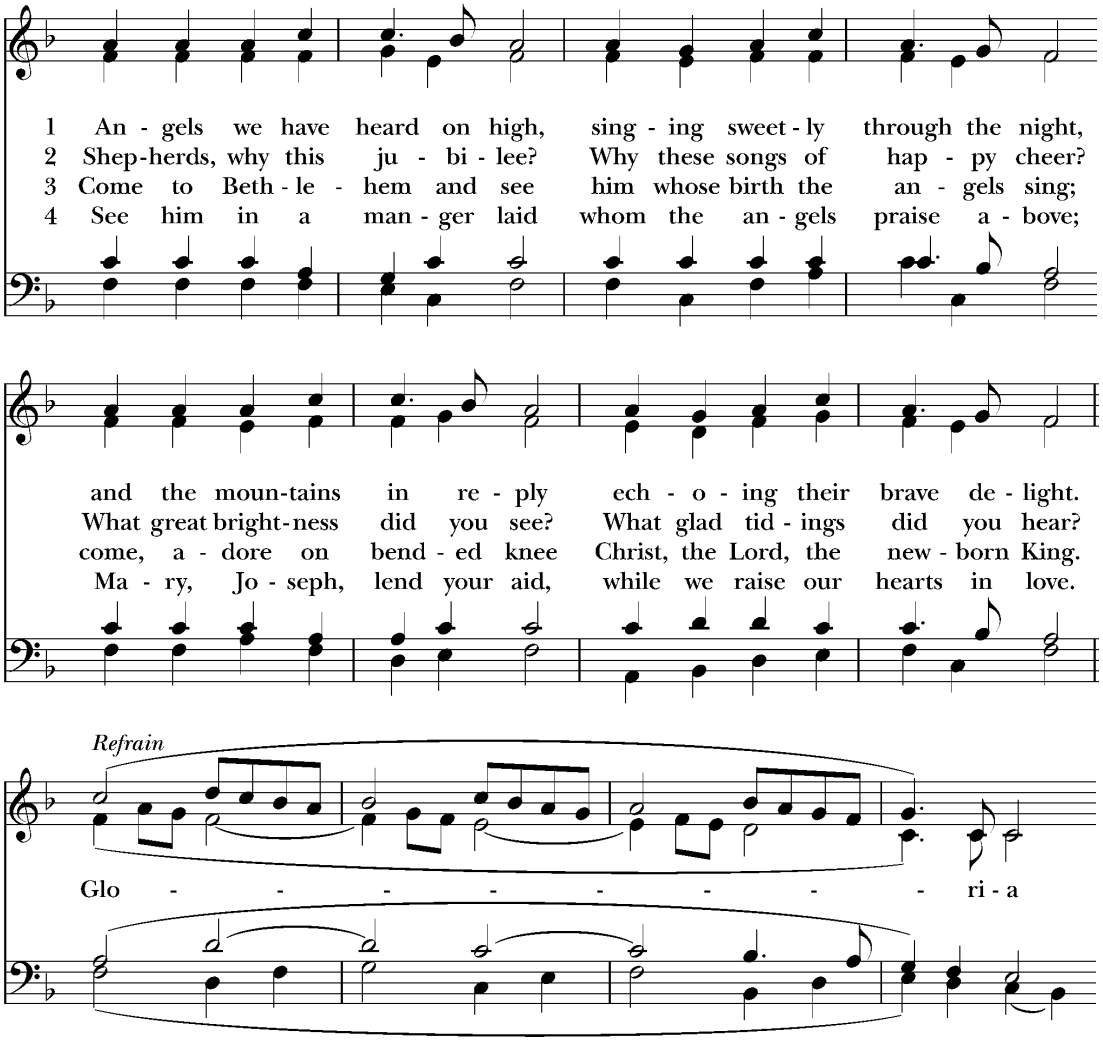
Opening Acclamation

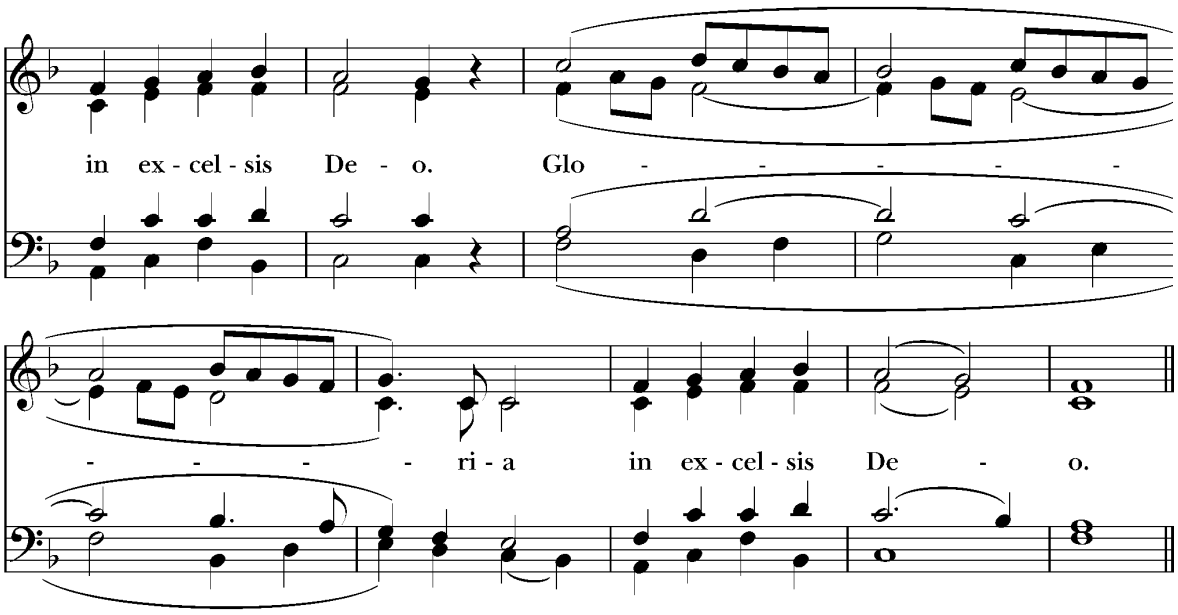
Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People You come to your people and set them free.

Collect for Purity

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.*

HYMN OF PRAISE: *Angels We have Heard on High, Gloria* (H96)





The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen*.

The Lessons

Please sit.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

A Reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

2 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.
3 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.

[4]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.
[5]For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
[6]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.
[7]His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

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

PSALM 96

[1]Sing to the Lord a new song; *
sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.
[2]Sing to the Lord and bless his Name; *
proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.
[3]Declare his glory among the nations *
and his wonders among all peoples.
[4]For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; *
he is more to be feared than all gods.
[5]As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; *
but it is the Lord who made the heavens.
[6]Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence! *
Oh, the power and the splendor of his sanctuary!
[7]Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; *
ascribe to the Lord honor and power.
[8]Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his Name; *
bring offerings and come into his courts.
[9]Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; *

let the whole earth tremble before him.
[10]Tell it out among the nations: "The Lord is King! *
He has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity."
[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 the Lord when he comes, *
when he comes to judge the earth.
[13]He will judge the world with righteousness *
and the peoples with his truth.

READING: Titus 2:11-14

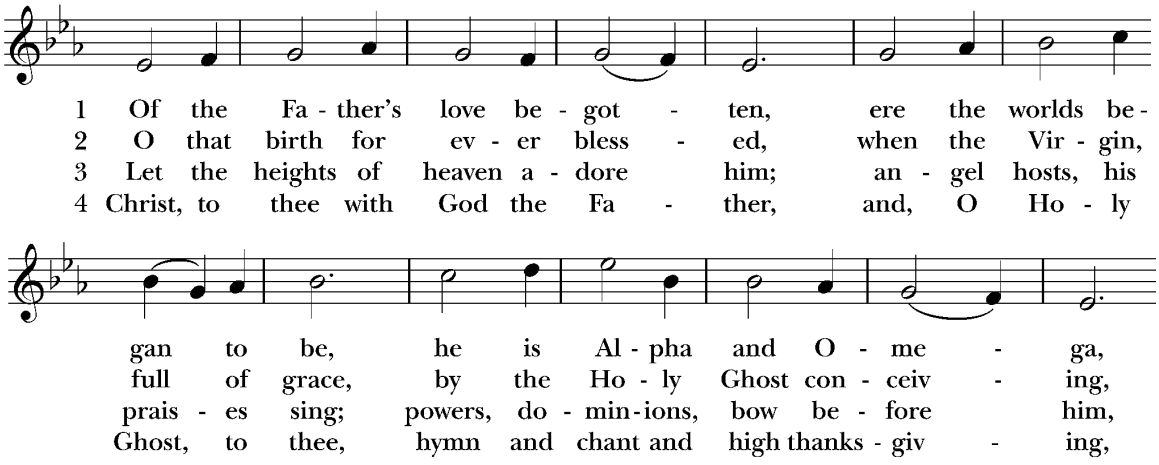
A Reading from Paul's letter to Titus.

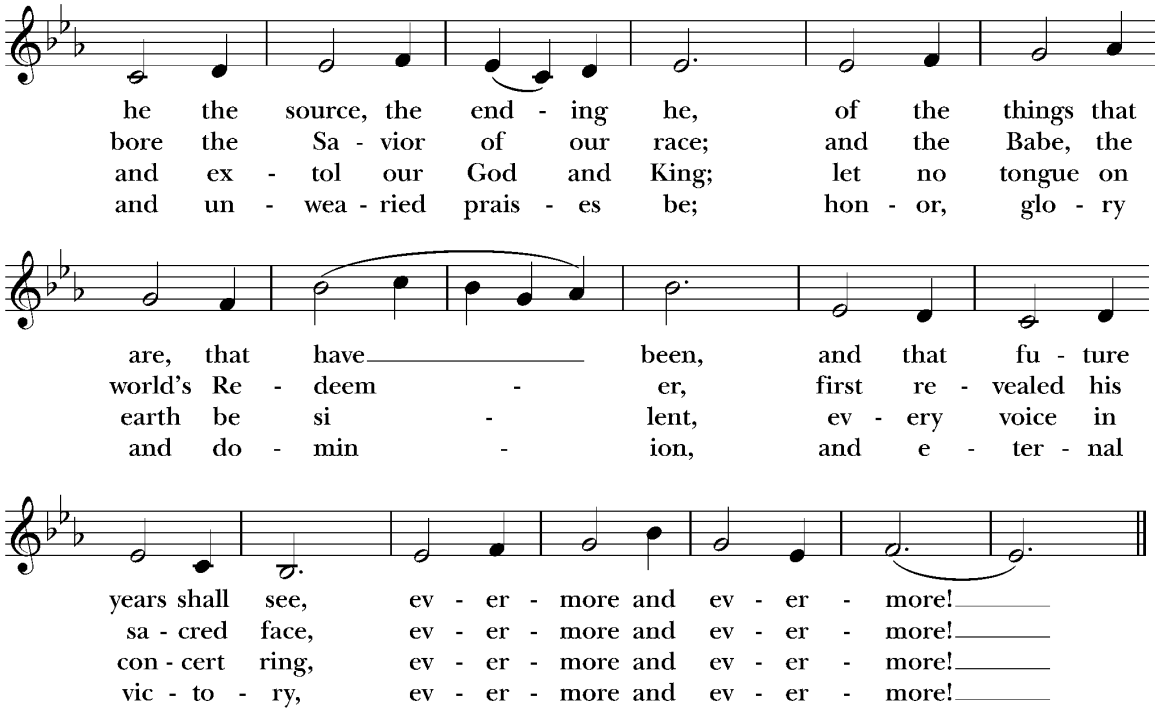
[11]The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, [12]training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, [13]while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. [14]He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

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

Please stand in body or spirit

Sequence Hymn: Of the Father's Love Begotten, Divinum mysterium (H82)





This hymn may be performed in equal note values: ♩♩♩♩

Please remain standing if able

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-14

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.
People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

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

[8]In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. [9]Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. [10]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: [11]to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. [12]This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." [13]And 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!"

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.
People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon: The Rev. Joe Ashby

The Creed

Please stand in body or spirit

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

Please remain standing

For those who lead and guide the Church of Christ; for loving care, we pray to you, O Lord:
God ever faithful, God ever merciful, God of your people, hear our prayer.

For faithful witness, fellowship in love; for living hope, we pray to you, O Lord:
God ever faithful, God ever merciful, God of your people, hear our prayer.

For those who guide the nations of the earth; that wisdom reign, we pray to you, O Lord:
God ever faithful, God ever merciful, God of your people, hear our prayer.

For those who seek and serve the common good; that justice reign, we pray to you, O Lord:
God ever faithful, God ever merciful, God of your people, hear our prayer.

For neighbors' needs, for shelter from the storm; for homes of peace, we pray to you, O Lord:
God ever faithful, God ever merciful, God of your people, hear our prayer.

For those in sorrow, anguish, and despair; that they find hope, we pray to you, O Lord:
God ever faithful, God ever merciful, God of your people, hear our prayer.

For those oppressed, for those who live in fear; that they be freed, we pray to you, O Lord:
God ever faithful, God ever merciful, God of your people, hear our prayer.

For all the sick, especially Peggy Neidig, Cara Warren, Alice Bolam, Valerie Frear, Molly Weisel, Gene, Andrea, Marilyn Dickinson, Ed Denning, Doug Geissinger, Joanne, Jackson, Gary, Richard Green, Steve Hamilton, Deborah Starkey, John Titmas, Holly Hillen, Bob Reiner, Frances Beacon, Vicki Simpkins and Ashley Stroud, be life and grace, we pray to you, O Lord:
God ever faithful, God ever merciful, God of your people, hear our prayer.

That we might live in peace from day to day; that wars will cease, we pray to you, O Lord:
God ever faithful, God ever merciful, God of your people, hear our prayer.

That we may stay faithful, open to your Word; your Kingdom come! We pray to you, O Lord:

God ever faithful, God ever merciful, God of your people, hear our prayer.

For all the dreams held deep within our hearts;for all our needs, we pray to you, O Lord:
God ever faithful, God ever merciful, God of your people, hear our prayer.

Entrusting all we are into your hands, we call your name, and pray to you, O Lord:
God ever faithful, God ever merciful, God of your people, hear our prayer.

Please pray the St. Paul's Discernment Prayer together:
O Lord our God,
May we, the parish of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, embrace your commandment of loving our neighbors as you have loved us while we discern who we are and how best to serve you.
We ask that you quiet our souls, so we may listen to you.
We ask that you grant us wisdom as we seek new leadership.
And lastly, we ask for the courage to follow wherever you lead us.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Celebrant: 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

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Priest 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 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.

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People And also with you.
The People greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Blessing of the Reverse Advent Calendar gifts

Holy Communion

Offertory Sentence (Psalm 50:14)

The Celebrant says
Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good your vows to the Most High.
Psalm 50:14

OFFERTORY ANTHEM: *I wonder as I wander,* Timothy Noon

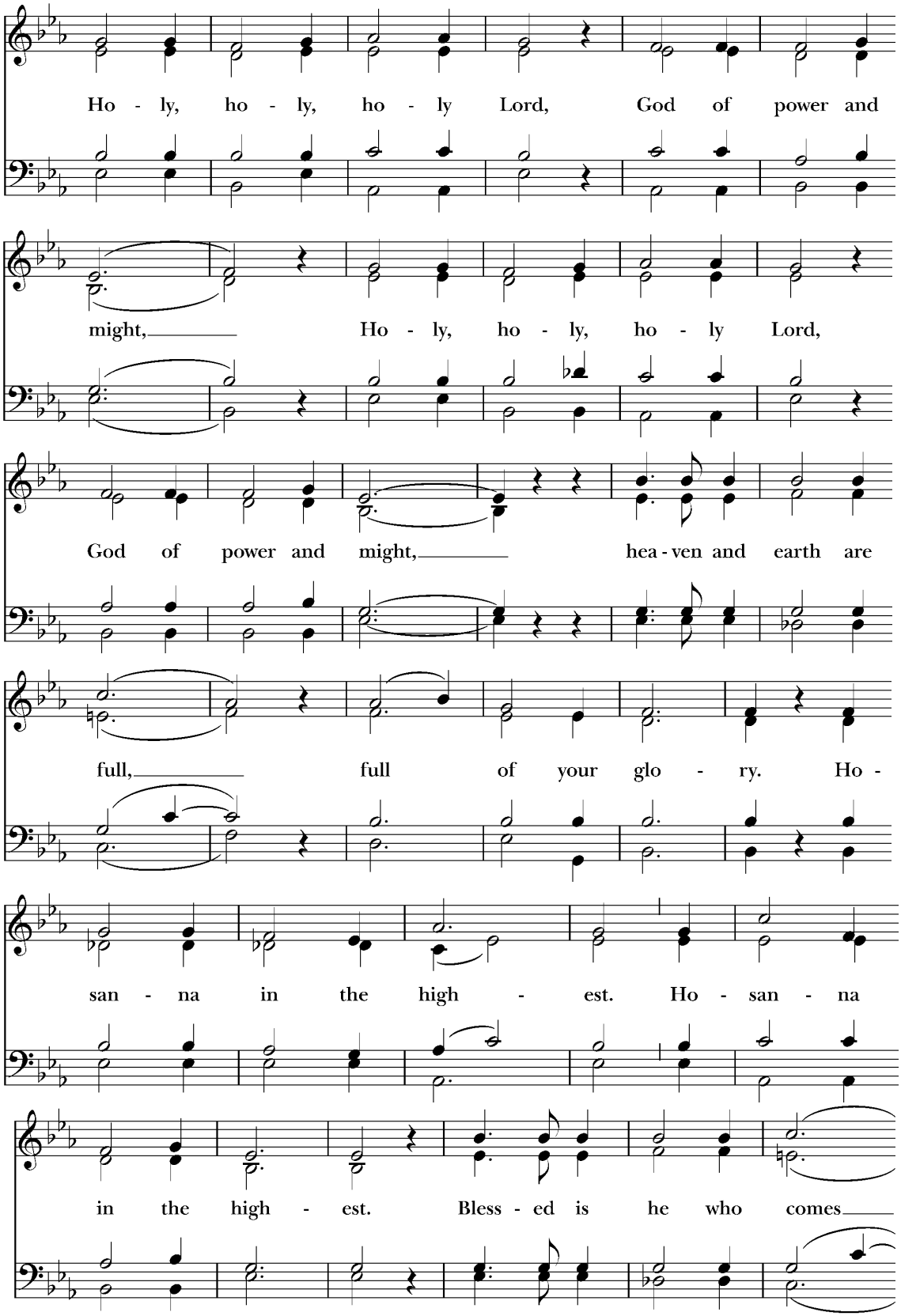
The Great Thanksgiving

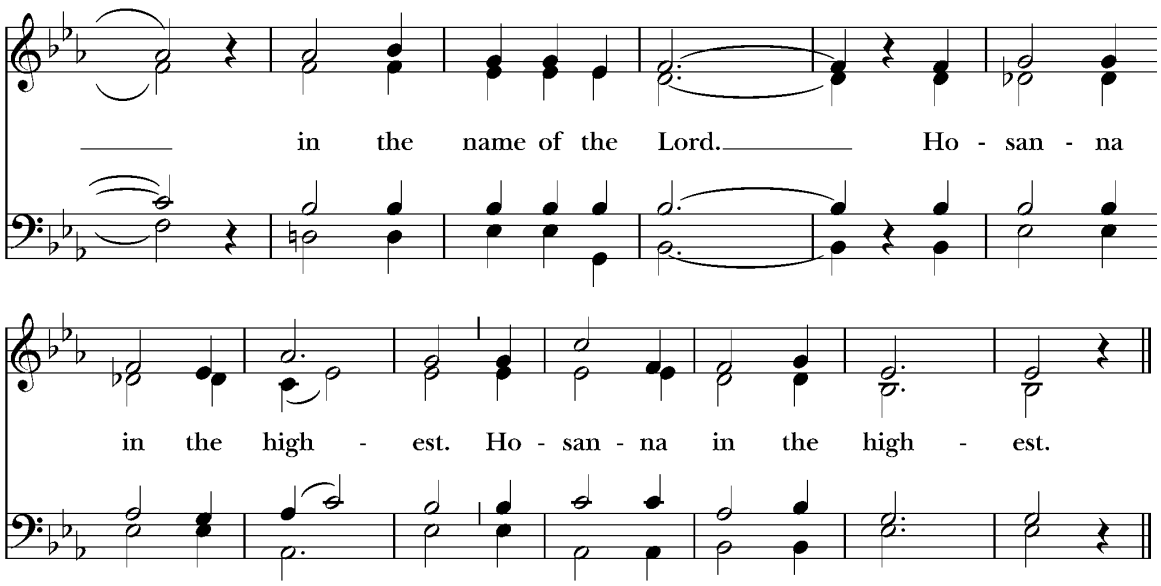
The People remain standing.

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Celebrant Lift up your hearts.
People We lift them to the Lord.
Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, 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:
♪♪♪

SANCTUS


Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and
might, Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,
God of power and might, hea - ven and earth are
full, full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na
in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



Celebrant and People

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;

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 Paul 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.***

The Lord's Prayer

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,
Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

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

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Spiritual Communion

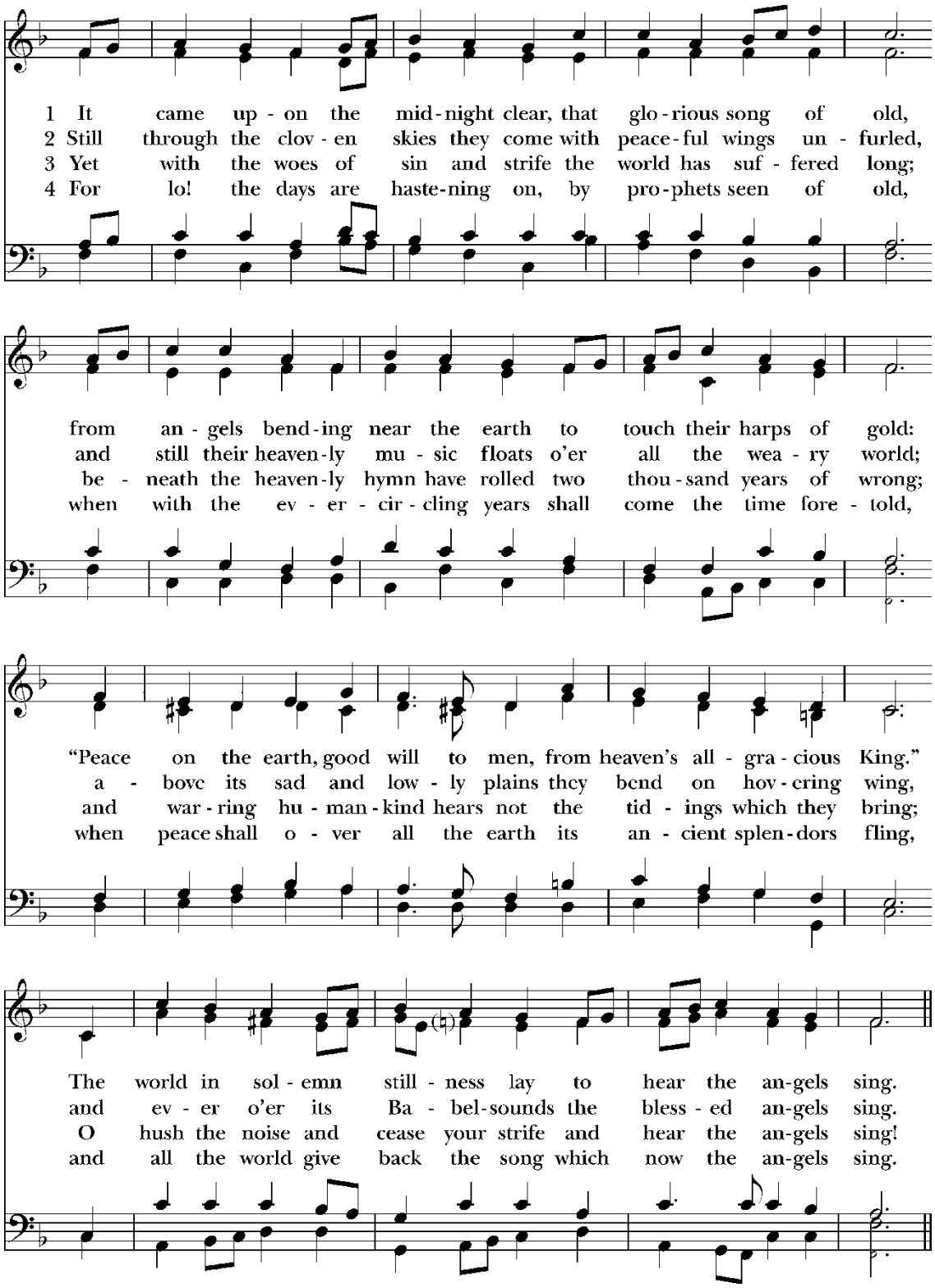
Celebrant: Please join us in praying with our siblings in Christ who are with us online and receiving communion spiritually.

Dearest Lord Jesus, we believe that you are truly present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. We love you above all things and long for you in our souls. Since we are not altogether in our church today to receive the bread and wine made holy, we ask you to come spiritually into our hearts. Fill us with your light and nourish us all with your word and Spirit. Amen.

All are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Please tell the clergy if you need gluten-free bread. If you come to the communion station for a blessing instead, please cross your arms on your chest. If you are interested in being baptized, please contact the Priest of St. Paul's.

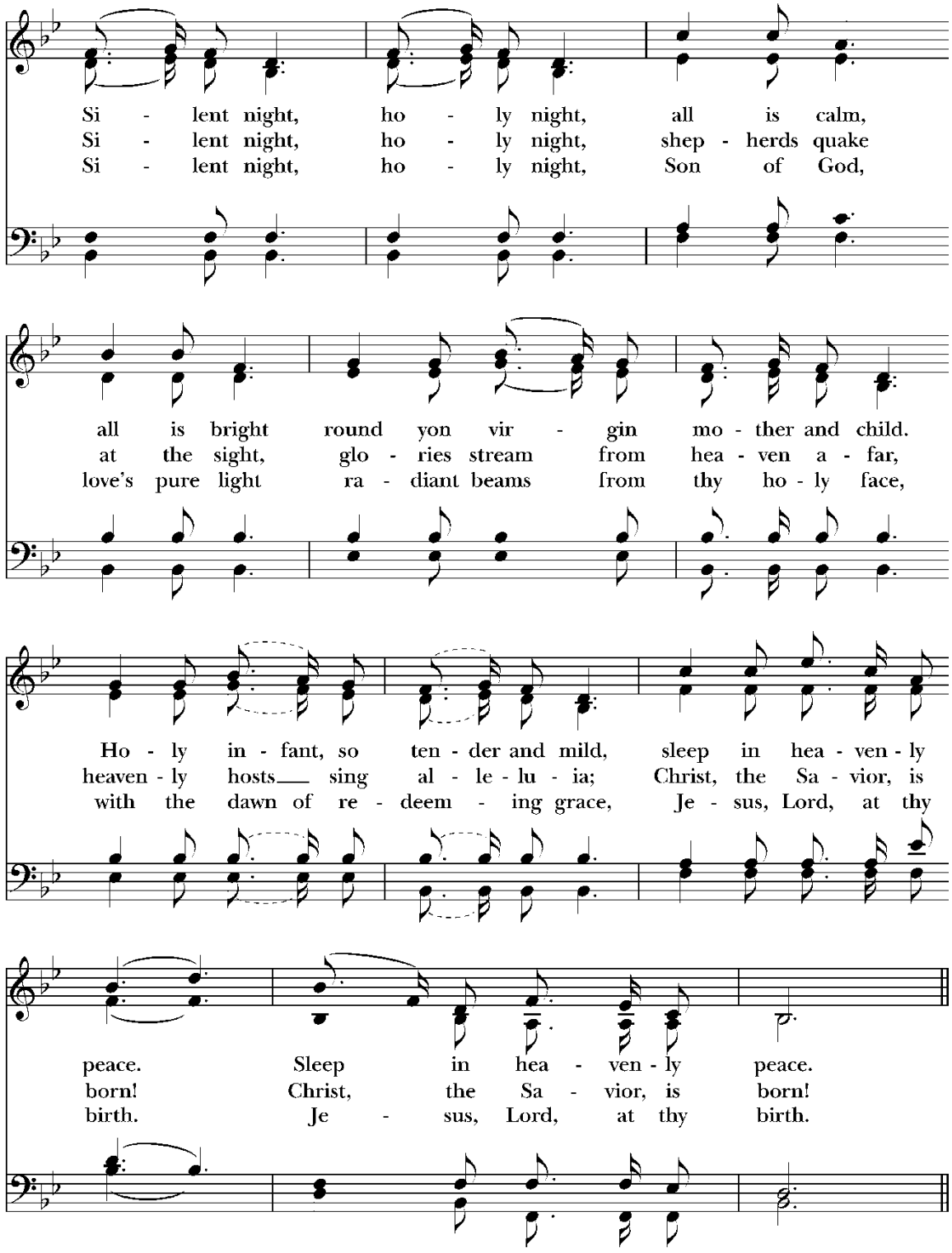
Celebrant: The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life.

COMMUNION HYMN: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear (H90)



Following communion, as we sing Silent Night, we will share the light of Christ by passing the flames to each others' candles throughout the sanctuary.

POST-COMMUNION HYMN: *Silent Night Stille Nacht* (H111)



Post-Communion Prayer

Let us pray.

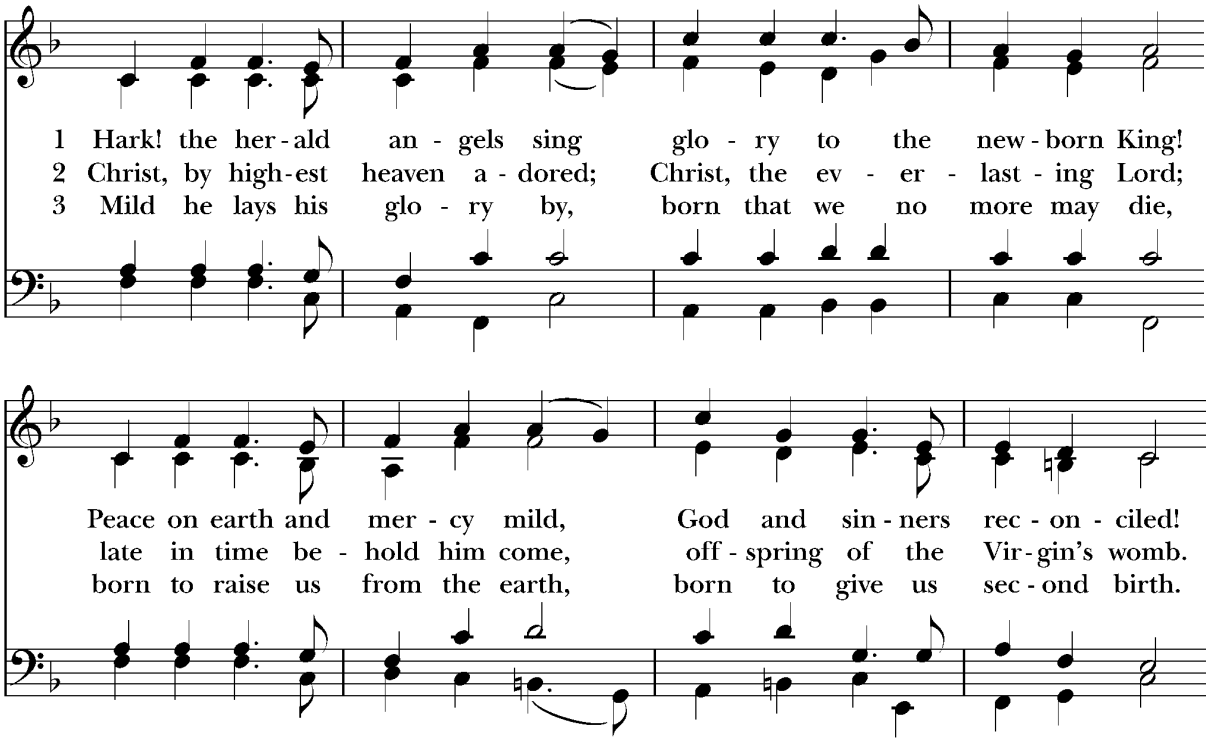
Celebrant and People

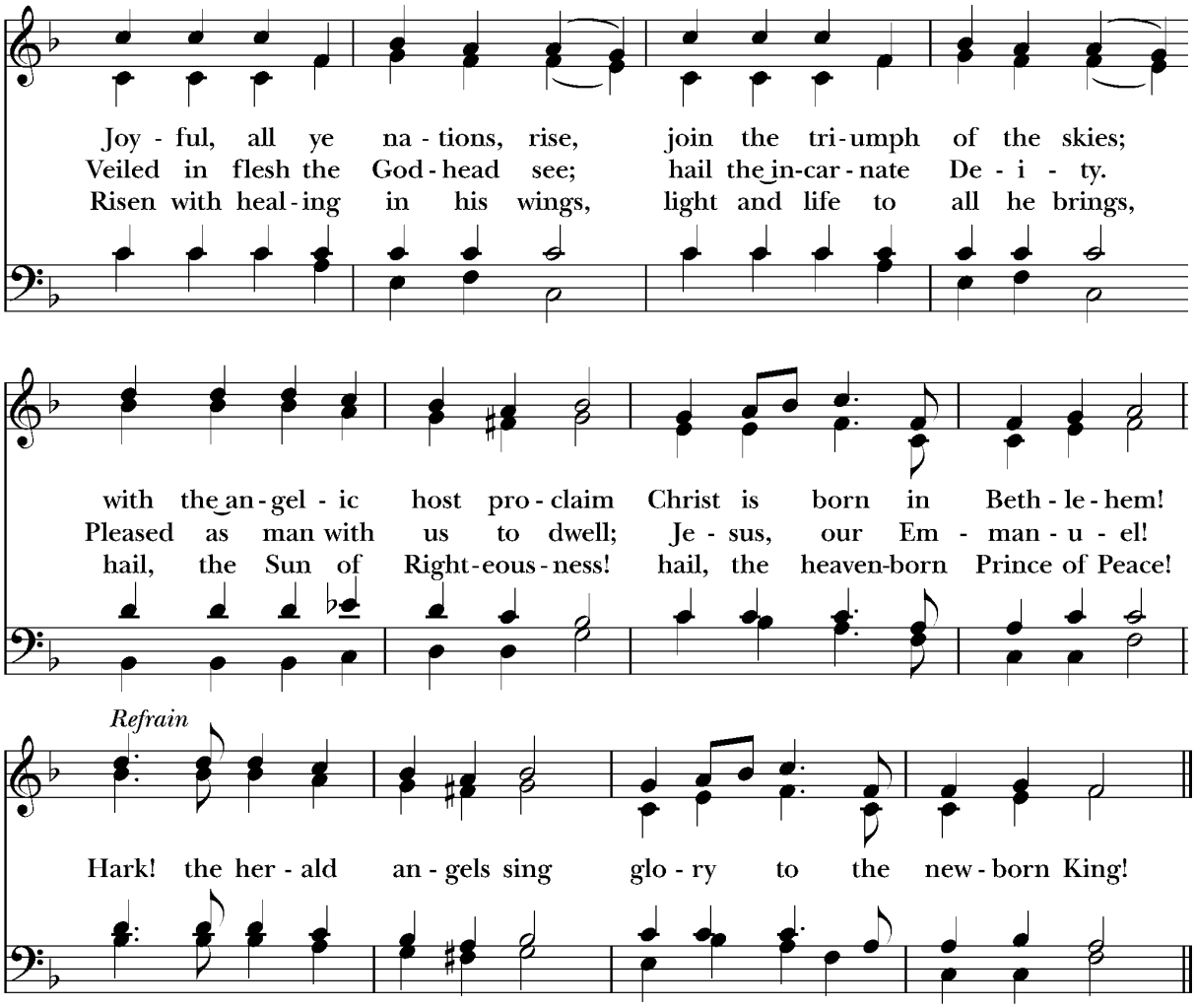
Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Post-communion blessing

Celebrant: The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ or Lord, and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son , and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you, and remain with you always. *Amen.*

RECESSIONAL HYMN: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (Mendelssohn) (H87)





Dismissal

Celebrant: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
People: Thanks be to God.

Postlude: *In dulci jubilo,* Johann Sebastian Bach

TODAY'S SERVERS:

Celebrants: The Revs. Joe and Kay Ashby
Parish musician: Edward Grimes
Greeters: David Lewis
Crucifer/Thurifer: Karl Roshong and Douglas Colmery
Eucharistic Minister/Torchbearer: Demetrius Carrothers, Nancy Suba, M.L. Schultze
Video: David Lewis
Altar Guild: Demetrius Carrothers and Susan Phillips
Lector: M.L. Schultze
Counters: M.L. Schultze and Carol Sutek

Announcements

Celebrating December Birthdays

Richard Oloya, Dec. 4
William Kendrick, Dec. 5
Deborah Husted, Dec. 6
Margaret Moore-Neidig, Dec. 18
Dan Lewton, Dec. 23
John Titmas, Dec. 24
Jesus Christ, Dec. 25

More Christmas Joy to come…

Please join us after tonight's service for a light reception and plenty of holiday cheer in the Guild Hall. Sweet and savory snacks, wine (both alcohol and nonalcohol) will be served.

Tomorrow, on Christmas Day, Fr. Joe is offering a Christmas compline via Zoom at 4 p.m. It's a moment to breathe deep on a busy day and celebrate the good news in a quieter way. Click here for the link to the Christmas Day service.

You're also invited to join us as St. Paul's and the other downtown churches make a bit of history with a joint ecumenical service celebrating the first Sunday of Christmas this Sunday at Christ Presbyterian Church, 530 Tuscarawas St. W at 10: 30 a.m. A cookie reception will follow.

And we can all get to know our fellow Stark County Episcopalians a bit better on Epiphany Sunday, Jan. 4, as St. Mark's, St. Timothy's and St. Paul's raise their voices in lessons and carols at 3 p.m. at St. Timothy's, 226 3rd Street SE, Massillon, OH, 44646, 3 p.m.

Extending Advent as well

It's not too late to contribute to St. Paul's "Reverse Advent" collection of personal care and shelf-stable food for our neighbors at the Canton YWCA. The packages will be delivered on Epiphany, Jan. 6. For ideas of needed items, please see the "Reverse Advent calendars in the Narthex.

THE Episcopal CHURCH

We believe God Loves You. No Exceptions.

The mission of The Episcopal Church, as stated in the Book of Common Prayer's catechism, is "to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ." In step with that mission, we follow Jesus into loving, liberating, and life-giving relationships with God, with each other, and with the earth.

2025 Christmas Flower Memorials

In Memory of:	*By:*
Max G. & Mary Alyce Brokaw Dick L. & Betty Anderson	Rick & Barbara Anderson
Donald Brown and Loved Ones	Shirley Brown
Lee Arnold	Marianne Arnold
Kathleen Green	Kelli Green
Ed Sutek, Andy & Jo Lubnick, Nick & Anne Sutek, Sam & Susan Campian, John & Ann Mizanoski	Sutek Family
Grandparents, Parents, Donny, Brianna	Linda & Mark Heitger
Adam, Alipayo and Lilian, our Parents	Richard & Dorothy Oloya
Elizabeth & Norm Lewis	Beth & Mike Paynter
Janet & E. H. Cassler, Mr. & Mrs. H. O. Klingstedt	Nancy Suba

In Honor of:	*By:*
Alice Oloya, our Mother	Richard & Dorothy Oloya

To the Glory of God for:	*By:*
Our Family	Linda & Mark Heitger
The People of St. Paul's	Revs. Joe & Kay Ashby

General Donations made by: Serena Thurin, Richard & Dorothy Oloya, Kelli Green, Sutek Family, Linda & Mark Heitger. Thank you!

A Christmas Message from Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe

Dear people of God in The Episcopal Church,

If you imagine yourself as a character in the Gospel Nativity readings, you'll soon realize that the first Christmas was not about staying home by a warm hearth with chestnuts roasting and stockings hanging. Everyone in these passages is on the move, mostly without warning and against their will. Joseph and Mary are summoned from Nazareth to Bethlehem for a census. Shepherds, at the behest of an angel, leave their sheep in the fields to see what all the fuss is about. And the three Magi, my favorites, are just sitting there minding their own kingdoms when a star intrudes on their lives and leads them on an unplanned and uncomfortable trip far away from home.

The Anglican poet T.S. Eliot wrote a poem about that arduous journey from the perspective of one of the Magi, recounting, among other things, the difficulty of getting camels to do as they are told. The three kings' encounter with the newborn son of God was hard, disruptive, and unsettling. And when they returned home—by a different road to elude capture by Herod—it no longer felt like home. In Eliot's retelling, the first Christmas turned the Magis' lives upside down, and they had mixed feelings about the whole experience.

You might be greeting Christmas this year with the awe of the shepherds or the wariness of the Magi. Either way, the Gospel reminds us that Jesus came both to experience all of the joy, uncertainty, and brokenness of our humanity, and to bring God's kingdom near. The birth of the Christ Child heralds a new reality in which the last shall be first, the hungry will be fed, and the stranger among us shall be welcomed as a beloved child of God.

This Christmas, I hope that you will join me in proclaiming these good tidings by supporting the most vulnerable among us with a donation to one of these Episcopal Church ministries:

Episcopal Migration Ministries, which works with dioceses and ministry networks to serve migrants and protect their rights.

Good Friday Offering for the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East, which supports lifesaving ministry in Gaza and across the Holy Land.

Episcopal Relief & Development, which works for lasting change in communities affected by injustice, poverty, disaster, and climate change.

I am grateful to be on the journey of faith with you. May God bless you and all those you love this Christmas and always.

+Sean

The Most Rev. Sean W. Rowe
Presiding Bishop
The Episcopal Church

More about St. Paul's

After a nomadic start, St. Paul's Episcopal Church has been on the same corner of Cleveland Avenue and Fifth Street SW since 1869. In 1923, the original wooden building was replaced by a Gothic stone ediface, and in 1959, we added the Guild Hall.

Throughout much of its history, our church has committed to serving the people of downtown, with Canton's first preschool, extensive education efforts and the first consignment shop designed to help women entering the work force. Our oldest continuing ministry is the Harvest Outreach Table, offering a hot lunch and warm friendship to the community on the fourth Saturday of each month. Our food ministry has expanded to hosting the weekly "Oatmeal Breakfast" of our fellow downtown church, Crossroads United Methodist, and a weekly community lunch – both on Sundays.

We also house AA and NA groups and offer free youth activities for the children of NA attendees on the first and third Saturdays of the month.

And we are a founding partner with Mt. Olive Baptist Church and StarkFresh of Courageous Conversations on Race Relations, a grass-roots effort to fight racism and the crippling damage it does to our souls and our community. CCORR meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. for dinner and discussion, and the Social Justice Book Group meets the following Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome.

As we travel a path of transition, St. Paul's has been blessed to have the leadership of the Revs. Joe and Kay Ashby as our interim clergy. Throughout this transition, we pledge to continue our works, buoyed by the calling of God to love our neighbor.

We're part of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio, the national Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion worldwide. We embrace their messages:

"Love God. Love Your Neighbor. Change the World"

And

"God Loves You. No Exceptions."

To reach us, call 330-455-0286 or email stpaulsoffice@att.net. You can follow us on our Web site, https://www.stpaulscanton.org/ and view our services live via YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/@stpaulscanton6927/streams, or Facebook Live -- www.facebook.com/stpaulscanton. Previous services are also available on our Web site. **And please join us in person any Sunday morning for services beginning at 10:30 a.m.**