

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



HOLY EUCHARIST: RITE II
DECEMBER 24TH AT 9:00 A.M.

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

St. John's is an Open and Affirming congregation. In faithfulness to Jesus and His commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves, we invite everyone to celebrate with us in the full life and ministry of the Church. We believe strongly in our mission statement to Grow in God, Act in Service, and Witness in Love.

A NOTE ABOUT OUR WORSHIP

Our Rite II service comes from the Book of Common Prayer and is filled with vibrant music, sacred scripture, and the breaking of bread. This service is filled with the joyful sound of children rustling in the pews, anthems sung to the glory of God, and the heartfelt prayers of those gathered. With acolytes and processions, communal singing, and a mission to love and serve our neighbors, this service invites one to participate in the coming of the Kingdom. At St. John's everyone is welcome to the Lord's table.

TO THOSE WHO MAY BE NEW OR ARE VISITING

We are so glad you are here! Ushers are stationed at the back of the church and can answer any questions you may have or please ask a neighbor in the next pew. Restrooms can be found on the other side of the Parish Hall. Thank you for being here!

ST. JOHN'S ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

Thank you to those who have submitted their 2024 pledge cards! To date, 94 members have pledged for a total of \$408,009. Our 2024 goal is \$425,000. If you haven't submitted your card yet, please do so as soon as possible so the vestry can move forward with 2024 plans! Thank YOU for sharing your ABUNDANCE!

THE WORD OF GOD

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you have an announcement, you would like the clergy to share, please fill out the form on our website or let the office know no later than Thursday.

PRELUDE

Gloria

Wolfgang A. Mozart

OPENING HYMN

Blest be the King whose coming

HYMN 74

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Reader 1: When the angel Gabriel visited Mary, announcing God’s plan for her to conceive and give birth to the Messiah, “Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’” (Luke 1:34) And yet, only a few months later, Mary sings to Elizabeth,

My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name (Luke 1:46-49).

Reader 2: We, like Mary, hear God’s call to be part of making God’s dream for our salvation and flourishing a reality, and we question, “How can this be? I am only…” Yet, like Mary, the “onlys” that make us hesitate are gifts God can and will use as God’s love transforms us into bearers of good news.

People: *We wait as people who have encountered divine Love that disrupts the status quo and ushers us into abundant life marked by mutual love and peace that flows from the flourishing of all people.*

Reader 1: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, and the love that transforms us. May Love grow within us, transforming us into bold witnesses of God’s salvation with our voices and our lives. *Amen.*

OPENING ACCLAMATION (*please remain standing as you are able*)

BCP 355

Officiant Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.
People *His mercy endures for ever.*

COLLECT FOR PURITY

BCP 355

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.*

TRISAGION

HYMNAL S-100

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

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

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.*

THE FIRST LESSON: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 (*please be seated*)

When the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the 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." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you."

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I 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. Wherever 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?" Now 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; and 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. And 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, from 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. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The Word of the Lord.

People

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 89:1-4, 19-26 (*chant led by choir*)

PSALM 89 v. 1 to 36.

J. Turle.



- 1 Your love, O Lord, for ever will I sing; *
from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.
- 2 For I am persuaded that your love is established for ever; *
you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.
- 3 “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; *
I have sworn an oath to David my servant:
- 4 ‘I will establish your line for ever, *
and preserve your throne for all generations.’”
- 19 You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people: *
“I have set the crown upon a warrior
and have exalted one chosen out of the people.
- 20 I have found David my servant; *
with my holy oil have I anointed him.
- 21 My hand will hold him fast *
and my arm will make him strong.
- 22 No enemy shall deceive him, *
nor any wicked man bring him down.

- 23 I will crush his foes before him *
and strike down those who hate him.
- 24 My faithfulness and love shall be with him, *
and he shall be victorious through my Name.
- 25 I shall make his dominion extend *
from the Great Sea to the River.
- 26 He will say to me, ‘You are my Father, *
my God, and the rock of my salvation.’”

THE EPISTLE: Romans 16:25-27

Now 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 but 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-- to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL HYMN

Prepare the way, O Zion

HYMN 65

Verses 1 & 2 before the Gospel Reading; Verse 3 after the Gospel Reading

THE HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38 (*please remain standing as you are able*)

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

People *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “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 said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The 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. And 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. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then 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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

SERMON

THE REV. AMANDA KNOUSE

THE NICENE CREED (*please rise in body or spirit*)

BCP 358

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. (*pause*)

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 (*please kneel as you are able*)

In this season of waiting, let us pray together in thanksgiving as we gather in holy patience, saying, “God, be with us.”

In the Diocesan and Anglican cycle of prayer, we pray for Christ Episcopal Church, Williamsport; and The Episcopal Church in the Phillipines. For the church and all its people, the gathering of those called to wait in anticipation of your revelation, that we may be alert so when the time comes for us to behold you among us, we see you and receive you with prayers and praises of gratitude and thanksgiving, we pray:
God, be with us.

For all the nations of the world and those who bear the authority of leadership, especially Joe, our President; Josh, our Governor; Danene, our Mayor; and those serving in the Armed Forces; that the powers of this world may entrust our futures not to their own understanding, but to your ever unfolding wisdom, charity, and generosity. We pray for all your children caught in war and violence and pray for peace in the Holy Land, Ukraine, and throughout the world. *God, be with us.*

For the whole world, that in this season of hearing proclamations of the power of God, we would begin to see the song of Mary taking on flesh in our world, calling us to give of ourselves out of our spirit of gratitude, we pray: *God, be with us.*

We pray for our friends at home, especially Ellen Keller, Nancy Nemith, Peter Plaxa, Ricky Smith, Joanna Sweeney, Al Kuser, Mary Sue Farmer, Ellen Sellers, Edith Kane, Merle Schnee, Carol Greenfield, Sandy Grove, Carole Humphrey, Darlene Bentley, and Peggy Zuke. For our neighbors and our communities, that our hearts may be sensitive to the needs of the people in our midst and overcome with gratitude for them, so that we, as one people bound to each other, may wait together for the unfolding kingdom of God, we pray: *God, be with us.*

For those we love and care for, especially Pat Pankey, Jeannie Zeller, Kent Strickler, Nancy Strasburg, Justin & Lisa, Ella & Colleen, Matt Patterson, Michael Yoder, Kevin, Judy Modene, Angie Stamm, Andrew Gilpin, Jesse Rutledge, Ann Marie, Cheryl & Rhoda, Ted Griswold, Dave, Colleen Murphy, Joan Inshetski, Grant Hansel, Maria Sauder, and JoAnn Trenary. For all human suffering of all kinds and conditions, that we may be comforted by the presence of a God who took on flesh to know our suffering, to bear our suffering, and to give us, even in our suffering, a grace that calls us to give thanks, we pray: *God, be with us.*

For all who have died, those who have removed the veil and seen you face to face, that we may be inspired by the lives they lived on this earth, as they are now reminders that you will call us into a heavenly home, where our praises and our thanksgivings are brought into your nearer presence, we pray: *God, be with us.*

For the ways in which you are waiting with us, sitting beside us as we celebrate the joys of this life, giving thanks especially for those joys we now name, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts...(silence is kept) In our gratitude, we pray: *God, be with us.*

Celebrant God of wisdom, bring us into awareness of your presence, as we wait to become so close to you that we may touch even the hem of your cloak. Give us a patience only you can give, slow our hurried hearts, give peace to our anxious minds, and draw us into such a heart of gratitude that we may be caught serving one another when you arrive. *Amen.*

CONFESSION OF SIN

Celebrant Assured that God hears our repentance, let us turn our minds to the truth, confessing our sins to God and one another.

People Lord, have mercy on us. We are not ready for your coming. We live in sin, as though there were not justice. We live in fear, as though there were no grace. Forgive us, Lord. Show us your mercy and steadfast love. Lead us in your truth, and teach us your paths, for you are the God of our salvation. *Amen.*

Celebrant Merciful God, you come into our midst longing for communion with us, becoming one of us. Break our resistance to life with you, show us the path toward just relations, and bring us into your unimaginable peace. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, you are forgiven all your sins. *Amen.*

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,

*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 St. John 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 364

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,
for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

BCP 364

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

THE INVITATION

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

ADMINISTRATION OF COMMUNION

The Episcopal Church invites all who seek God to our Lord's table. If you wish to receive, please come forward to the altar rail when the usher indicates. Hold out your hands to receive the bread. For the wine, you can receive by guiding the chalice to your lips or by dipping your wafer into the separate intinction cup. If you do not wish to receive the wine, cross your arms over your chest when the wine passes. If you desire a blessing instead of communion, simply cross your arms over your chest. When finished, please exit to your right. Gluten free wafers are also available.

COMMUNION HYMNS

*O heavenly Word
O come, O come, Emmanuel*

HYMN 64
HYMN 56

SENDING FORTH OF THE EUCHARISTIC VISITORS

Celebrant In the name of God and on behalf of this parish, I send you forth bearing these holy gifts, that those to whom you go may share with us in the communion of Christ's body and blood.

People *We, who are many, are one body because we all share one bread, one cup.*

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful as we await the coming of your Son our Lord; that, when he shall appear, he may not find us sleeping in sin but active in his service and joyful in his praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE BLESSING

May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*

CLOSING HYMN *The King shall come when morning dawns* **HYMN 73**

THE DISMISSAL

Celebrant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

POSTLUDE *The Thankful Heart Rejoices* Lani Smith

St. John's Traveler Letter:

Did you know St. John's has a team of pilgrims who travel every week to the very places we pray for in the Anglican communion? Follow John as he shares a little bit about the church and the places he visits:

Dear Pastor Amanda,

Maligayang Pasko, or Merry Christmas, from the Philippines!

There are over 7,000 islands that make up this east Asian country where I've spent the past week. I've been to only a handful of the islands, but no matter which one I visit, the message is the same: the Christmas spirit is alive and well here. Filipinos begin their Christmas season as early as August, and it's not uncommon to see spectacular Christmas displays set up in homes, offices, and schools, even when it's over 100 degrees outside.

I'm sure malls appreciate an extra-long Christmas shopping season – months of Christmas music on the radio, maybe not so much – but it speaks to a deeper appreciation of the spirit of Christmas by Filipinos. Throughout these months, people will gather for religious services and elaborate meals featuring puto bumbong, which is purple rice and sugar stuffed into bamboo shoots, and other Filipino specialties. Outside each house, people set up parol lanterns, which are made of bamboo and paper, that serve as a guiding light towards Christmas worship as we all approach December 25.

In times like this, I'm reminded of the miracle of the Christmas story – that no matter where you grow up, whether that's in a small Pennsylvania town or an island in the Philippines, the message is the same one that sticks with people around the globe. Jesus' birth is one of love, hope, and joy for all. I encourage us all to hold that in our hearts over the next year and beyond.

Merry Christmas to you all,

John Traveler

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S:

TODAY

Advent IV & Christmas Eve

9:00 AM Single Service
3:30 PM Family Service
9:30 PM Candlelit Service

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25

10:00 AM Morning Prayer on Zoom

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

Office Closed for Holiday

2:30 PM Food Pantry

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

12:00 PM Healing Service

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

2:30 PM Food Pantry

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

Rector's Day Off

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

St. John's Day

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist: Rite I
10:15 AM Holy Eucharist: Rite II

CHRISTMAS DAY MORNING PRAYER AT 10:00 A.M.

After the presents have been unwrapped and the coffee enjoyed, join us for a time of worship on Christmas morning. Our service will take place on zoom, so please join us from wherever you are!

Meeting ID: 813 5064 9317

Passcode: 970627

WELCOME

Welcome to St. John's Episcopal Church! We are glad you are here. Please tell us a little bit about yourself by filling out a pew card and placing it in the offertory plate.

OUR MINISTERS

All Baptized Members

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Audrey C. Scanlan, Diocesan Bishop

The Rev. Amanda Knouse, Rector
amanda@stjohns-lancaster.org

The Rev. Jen Trenary, Assistant Rector
jen@stjohns-lancaster.org

The Rev. Stacey Catigano, Deacon
scatigano@gmail.com

VESTRY

Mary Waskowicz (Senior Warden), Leslie Morgan (Junior Warden),
Nick DiPace, Andy Welaish, John Modene
Liz West, Ted Loose, Kathy Kyper

DELEGATES REPRESENTING ST. JOHN'S AT DIOCESAN CONVENTION

Drew Dorgan, Webb Cook,
David Rutledge, Heather Trenary, Sue Heilman

STAFF

Douglas Beach, Minister of Music & Communications
Dana Sanborn, Bookkeeper
John Knouse, Property Manager
Stephanie Cabrera, Custodian
Ellia Osofsky, Nursery Care

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