

Welcome to St. John's Church



CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE AND THE BLESSING OF THE CRÈCHE

December 24, 2021

5:00 p.m.

WELCOME TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP!

The health and safety of the most vulnerable in our congregation and community remains the highest concern to St. John's. Remember that many in our communities are not vaccinated; all of those under 5 years old, those who are immuno-compromised, and those who have chosen not to be vaccinated for other reasons. While many are now vaccinated, remember that even a percentage of those vaccinated can contract the coronavirus, and while their symptoms may be milder, they can also spread the virus to loved ones and friends back home. We have not yet reached herd immunity as a nation. So please remain vigilant in safety protocols, mindful of the risk in our community, masked indoors, social distancing and getting vaccinated with booster, if possible. And be assured that we will continue to 'live stream' our worship to both our St. John's YouTube Page and our St. John's Facebook page.

LESSONS AND CAROLS ON THE EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND THE BLESSING OF THE CRÈCHE

St. John's asks everyone to wear masks inside the church, whether vaccinated or not.

Prelude

The Call to Worship with the tolling of the church bell

Opening Hymn # 83 *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

*1 O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come, and behold him,
born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.*

*2 God from God,
Light from Light eternal,
lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
only-begotten
Son of God the Father;*

Refrain

*4 See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
we too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps;*

Refrain

Opening Acclamation

Celebrant Behold, I bring good news of great joy which will come to all the people: for to you is born in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

People *Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.*

THE COLLECT

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People *And also with you.*

Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

The Story of the Birth of Jesus

LUKE 2:1-5

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child

Mary and Joseph are placed in the creche

HYMN # 78

O Little Town Of Bethlehem

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

*the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.*

4 *Where children pure and happy
pray to the blessèd Child,
where misery cries out to thee,
Son of the mother mild;
where charity stands watching
and faith holds wide the door,
the dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
and Christmas comes once more.*

5 *O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!*

LUKE 2:6-7 While Mary and Joseph were there in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to deliver her child. 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.

The baby, Jesus is placed in the crèche

HYMN # 101 *Away In A Manger*

1 *Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

2 *The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,*

and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

- 3** *Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
close by me for ever, and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.*

LUKE 2:8-9 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

Hymn # 109 *The First Nowell The Angel Did Say*

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

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

- 2** *They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.*

Refrain

LUKE 2:10-12 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

The Angel of the Lord is placed in the creche

Hymnal # 96 *Angels We Have Heard On High*

- 1** *Angels we have heard on high,
singing sweetly through the night,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their brave delight.*

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

- 2** *Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why these songs of happy cheer?
What great brightness did you see?*

*What glad tidings did you hear?
Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

*3 Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn
King.*

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

*4 See him in a manger laid
whom the angels praise above;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
while we raise our hearts in love.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

LUKE 2:13-14: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

All the other angels and musicians are placed in the crèche

Hymn # 87 *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

*¹ Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem!*

*Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the newborn King!*

*2 Christ, by highest heaven adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail the incarnate Deity.
Pleased as man with man to dwell;*

Jesus, our Emmanuel!

Refrain

*3 Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Risen with healing in his wings,
light and life to all he brings,
hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
hail, the heaven-born Prince of
Peace!*

Refrain

LUKE 2:15-20 When 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." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The shepherds are placed in the creche

Hymn # 89 *It Came Upon The Midnight Clear*

*1 It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.*

*2 Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing,*

*and ever o'er its Babel-sounds
the blessed angels sing.*

*3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and warring humankind hears not
the tidings which they bring;
O hush the noise and cease your strife
and hear the angels sing!*

*4 For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song
which now the angels sing.*

THE HOMILY

Fr. Geoff, Priest-in-Charge

Please stand for the Station at the Creche

STATION AT THE CRECHE

Officiant The word was made flesh and dwelt among us:

People *And we beheld his glory.*

Officiant Let us pray.

Almighty and everliving God, you have given us a new revelation of your loving providence in the Coming of your Son Jesus Christ to be born of the Virgin Mary: Grant that as he shared our mortality, so we may share his eternity in the glory of your kingdom; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE PEACE

Officiant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People *And also with you.*

Then the Ministers and People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

THE OFFERTORY *O Holy Night* Adolphe Adam soloist: Isabella Dubow

Please sit or kneel for the Prayers

PRAYER OVER THE CRECHE

God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation you have made manifest your love: when our need for a Savior was great you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love. Lord, bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns forever and ever. *Amen.*

A Christmas Litany

Officiant Let us pray. By way of Bethlehem, lead us, O God, to newness of life.

People ***Hear us, Lord***

Officiant By the innocence of the Christ child renew our simple trust.

People ***Hear us, Lord***

Officiant By the tenderness of Mary, deliver us from cruelty and hardness of heart.

People ***Hear us, Lord***

Officiant By the patience of Joseph, save us from all rash judgement and ill-tempered action.

People ***Hear us, Lord***

Officiant By the shepherd's watch, open our eyes to the signs of thy coming.

People ***Hear us, Lord***

Officiant By the Wise Men's journey, keep our searching spirits from fainting.

People ***Hear us, Lord***

Officiant By the shining of the star, guide our feet into the way of peace.

People ***Hear us, Lord***

Officiant O God, who hast caused this holy night to shine with the illumination of the true Light: Grant us, we beseech thee, that as we have known the mystery of that Light upon earth, so may we also perfectly enjoy him in heaven; where with thee and the Holy Spirit he liveth and reigneth, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

(Please remain kneeling for the hymn which is sung by all)

Hymn # 111 *Silent Night, Holy Night*

1 *Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace.*

*2 Silent night, holy night,
shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born!*

*3 Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.*

CHRISTMAS BLESSING *(Please remain kneeling)*

Officiant May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of his holiness. **Amen.**

Officiant May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel. Amen. *Officiant* May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor. **Amen.**

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

Please stand and join in singing the hymn.

Hymn # 100 *Joy To The World!*

*1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing.*

*2 Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
let us our songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,
repeat the sounding joy.*

*3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found.*

*4 He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love.*

DISMISSAL *Please remain standing*
Officiant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
People ***Thanks be to God.***

Organ Postlude

Worship Ministers Today:
The Reverend Dr. Geoffrey Hahneman, *Celebrant*
Tom Brand, *Organist & Choirmaster*
Laura Daly, *Veejay (VJ)*
Quintin & Spencer Campbell, *Readers*
Isabella Dubow, *Soloist*
MB Witt: *Altar Guild*

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**78 Green Hill Road
Washington, CT 06793**

Staff

The Reverend Dr. Geoffrey Hahneman, *Priest-in-Charge*

Tom Brand, *Organist & Choirmaster*

Dawn Rosiello, *Parish Administrator*

Joan Burgess, *Foundation Administrator*

Vestry

David Gillespie, Susan McFeely, *Wardens*

Joan M. Beattie, *Clerk*

Laura Daly, *Clerk Pro-Temp*

Larry Littlefield, *Treasurer*

Hunter Brown, *Assistant Treasurer*

Class of 2021

Robert Futh, Larry Littlefield, MB Witt

Class of 2022

Sara Coles, Mary Davis, Andris Kalnins

Class of 2023

Laura Daly, Veronique Dulack, Joseph Claro

Diocesan Delegates: Sara Coles, MB Witt.

Parish Office Telephone: (860) 868-2527

Parish Office Hours: Wednesdays and Fridays, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

St. John's Email: stjohnschurch@snet.net

St. John's Website: <http://stjohnswashington.com/>

St. John's Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsChurchWashingtonCT>

St. John's YouTube Page:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoOwTnqlRss4BT8VwFul4qg>