

A decorative arrangement featuring a log slice with text, evergreen branches, pinecones, a red ornament, and four lit candles. The log slice is the central focus, with the text "Advent/ Christmas Devotional 2022" written on it in purple. The arrangement is set against a background of evergreen branches, pinecones, and a red ornament. Four lit candles in glass holders are arranged around the log slice, casting a warm glow. The background is a textured, light brown surface.

**Advent/  
Christmas  
Devotional  
2022**

**Better Together:**  
St. Elisabeth  
St. Gregory  
St. Lawrence  
Trinity  
Episcopal Churches



## Advent and Christmas Worship

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**This booklet is an invitation to the Better Together community to join in daily prayer during the seasons of Advent and Christmas, concluding on the Epiphany. Each day has a brief excerpt from scripture, a reflection by someone in the community, an offering of art, and an offering of music – it is designed to be done in 5-7 minutes. There is always the option to read more scripture and spend more time in prayer!**

**The season of Advent** is a season of preparation, expectation, and surprise in which we prepare our hearts, minds, and souls to meet Jesus face to face. We are invited to build space into our private time of prayer and our corporate liturgy to examine the coming of Christ and to make space in our hearts for the power of God among us.

We celebrate **Christmas Eve and Christmas Day** in the joy of community.



**St Elisabeth:** **Christmas Eve 4 pm – Pageant with communion and special Choral Eucharist and sermon**  
**Christmas Day 10 am – Morning Prayer with carols**



**St. Gregory:** **Christmas Eve 4 pm**  
**Christmas Day 9:30 am**



**St. Lawrence:** **Christmas Eve 4:30 pm – Carols**  
**8:00 pm – Service**  
**Christmas Day – 9 am**



**Trinity:** **Christmas Eve 4 pm**

**The 12 Days of Christmas** follow Christmas Day, and we spend these days rejoicing at our Savior's birth – God incarnate as the Word made flesh. We celebrate with Christmas carols and find new ways to pay attention to God among us as we aren't among each other! John's gospel (always our gospel reading for the first Sunday after Christmas as well as Christmas Day) starts with a statement so grand, so mind-bending, so extraordinary that we cannot help but rejoice that God is so much more than we could ever ask or imagine. This is the God that we trust in this season like no other.

**The Feast of the Epiphany is January 6th.** Epiphany marks the world acknowledging Jesus' birth, and reminds us that God's guidance always leads us to Jesus' presence. When we contemplate the magnitude of what God has done for us in choosing to be incarnate here on earth, we can't help but fall on our knees alongside the foreign visitors who come bearing gifts. We will celebrate this feast together online with worship and our Epiphany Pageant.



**Sunday worship at St. Elisabeth**

8:00 am Traditional Language Holy Communion

10:00 am Inclusive Language Holy Communion

**Sunday worship at St. Gregory's**

9:30am onsite AND online (Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube) –

worship with Eucharist, music, singing, and participation by people of all ages.

**Sunday worship at St. Lawrence**

9:30am onsite AND online (Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube) –

worship with Eucharist, music, singing, and participation by people of all ages.

**Sunday worship at Trinity**

9:00am in person sung Eucharist

11:00am Zoom service of readings and preaching with music

■ **Opening**

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you. -*Psalms 25:1*

■ **MATTHEW 24:36-44**

"But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

■ **Prayers**

Offer your intercessions for the world, the country, and our city.

Offer your intercessions for the church.

Offer your intercessions for the sick, sad, lonely, and afraid.

Offer your praise of joy and thanksgiving.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

■ **LORD'S PRAYER**

■ **Going Out**

Reveal among us the light of your presence that we may behold your power and glory. As we look for your coming among us this day, open our eyes to behold your presence and strengthen our hands to do your will, that the world may rejoice and give you praise.

**Dismissal**

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



## MONDAY – Delight in God

November 28, 2022 - First Week of Advent

### An excerpt from Psalm 1:1-2

Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful! Their delight is in the law of the Lord, and they meditate on his law day and night.

### MUSIC

#### “Clap Your Hands”

by Victor Johnson,  
sung by the StGs quartet

*“Shout for joy to the Lord,  
all the earth break forth  
into jubilant song!”*

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

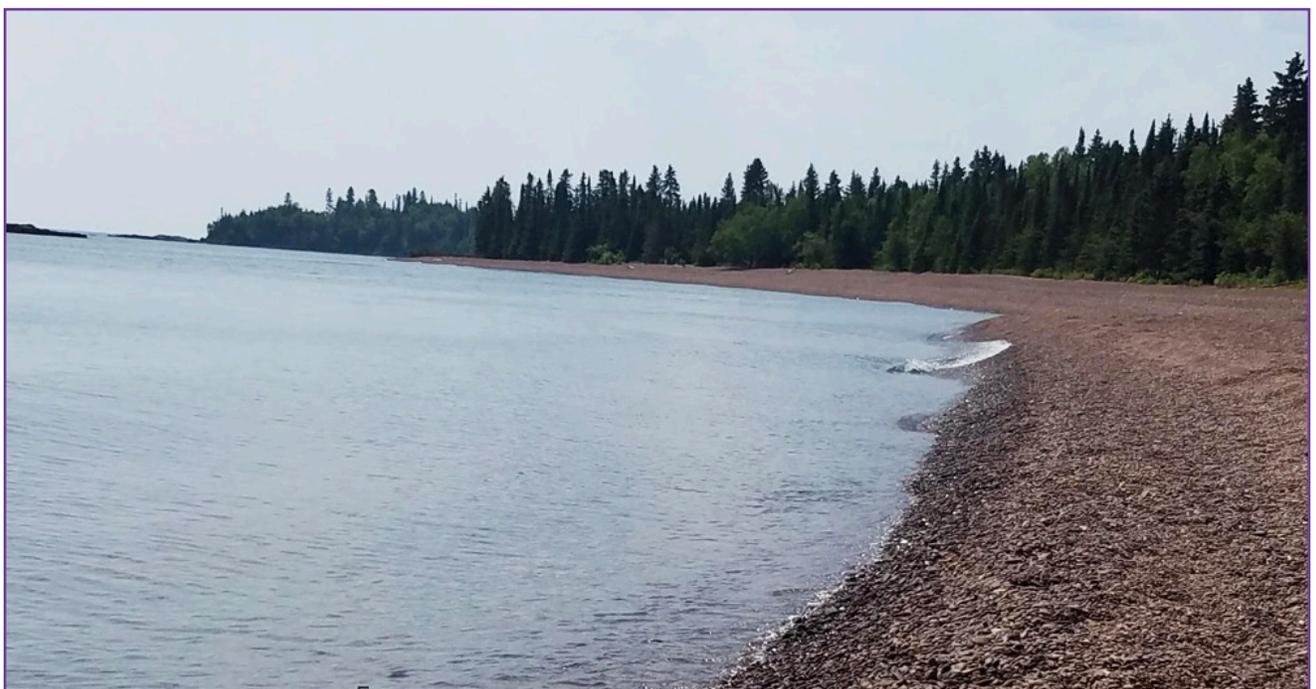
For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 1, 2, 3
- Isaiah 1:10-20
- Romans 6:1-11
- 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

### Reflection from Cale Secor,

**St. Lawrence:** I love the Psalms. Psalm 1 is one of the Wisdom Psalms because we learn we have choices of good over evil. A long time ago an astute friend told me to think of the “enemies” in the Psalms as my shortcomings or my problem areas. Since then, the Psalms make more sense to me. So, “lingering in the way of sinners and sitting in the seats of the scornful” for me, is not hanging out in my own trouble spots of self-pity, anger, and being judgmental, etc. The second verse of Psalm 1 “meditating on the Law of the Lord” reminds me that Jesus’ rule of love out weighs the Law. Jesus himself sat with sinners. So that is what I meditate on. Where do I see the love in the law? Is there love? How can I show love?

*Photograph by Cale Secor, St. Lawrence*





### An excerpt from Psalm 5:13-14

But all who take refuge in you will be glad; they will sing out their joy for ever. You will shelter them, so that those who love your Name may exult in you.

#### Reflection from Andrea Larson,

**St. Lawrence:** There are three words that stand out for me in this passage: “refuge,” “joy,” and “shelter.” They remind me of our beloved St. Lawrence, which has faithfully provided all these things over the years. Take a moment to reflect upon the times when your church has been a refuge for you, or the moments of joy you’ve experienced as a part of its community. God has given us so much through the church and its people. The building itself is not just a place of worship and fellowship, but an enduring symbol of God’s love for us. Today, let’s give thanks for our parishes, which have been our shelter for a long time, and which will provide refuge and joy for future generations.



Photograph by BJ Jones, St Lawrence

### MUSIC

“You Do Not Walk Alone”

by Elaine Hagenberg

*“May you see God’s light on the path ahead when the road you walk is dark.”*

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 5, 6
- Isaiah 1:21-31
- 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10



## WEDNESDAY – Divine abundance

November 30, 2022 - First Week of Advent



Photograph by Betsy Barnett, St. Lawrence

### An excerpt from Isaiah 25:6-7

Turn, O Lord! How long? Have compassion on your servants! Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us, and as many years as we have seen evil. Let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands – O prosper the work of our hands!

### MUSIC

*“Up to the Mountain”*  
by Patty Griffin

*“The peaceful valley  
Just over the mountain  
The peaceful valley  
Few come to know  
I may never get there  
Ever in this lifetime  
But sooner or later  
It’s there I will go”*

### Reflection from Betsy Barnett,

**St. Lawrence:** A typical Saturday morning at Hope Food Pantry often begins with the question, “will there be enough \_\_\_ today? It seems the question isn’t really about whether or not there are enough apples or cucumbers or chickens, but really, how do we share our bounty in an equitable way? This scripture is a reminder of all the gifts God has so lovingly bestowed upon us. God has provided us an earth abundant with fruits and plants and animals, and yet too many people do not have enough to eat each day. God has shown us a path to everlasting life, yet too many people live in fear. Let us pray today for all those who struggle with scarcity of food, love, or hope. May they receive their daily bread and believe in the heavenly banquet yet to come.

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 119:145-176
- Isaiah 25:1-10
- Luke 21:10-19



An excerpt from Isaiah 26:4

Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord God you have an everlasting rock.

MUSIC

“Do Not Be Afraid”

by Philip Stopford;  
sung by the Ecclesium Choir

*“Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you,  
I have called you by your name; you are mine.”*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 18:1-20
- Isaiah 26:1-6
- Thessalonians 2:1-12

Reflection from Sharon Starr,

**St. Lawrence:** In these disruptive times, my trust in the bedrock of our institutions and the very future of our planet is being shaken. I look for God in creation and find reasons for hope: in the cycle of the seasons and the rebirth of spring, and in the persistence of new plant life that emerges after the devastation of forest fires. I am fearful about our future, but if I focus on a much bigger picture – the universe and eternity – I find comfort and security in my faith. God is everywhere and God is with us.

Image in the public domain ([www.fws.gov/media/new-growth-after-fire](http://www.fws.gov/media/new-growth-after-fire))





## FRIDAY – The Day of the Lord

December 2, 2022 - First Week of Advent



Image shared with permission of Libertyville Dance Academy and photographer, Ashley Deran

### MUSIC

*“Everytime I Feel the Spirit”*  
sung by Mahalia Jackson

*“Everytime I feel the Spirit moving  
in my heart, I will pray.”*

### An excerpt from Isaiah 29:18-19

At that time the deaf will hear  
word-for-word what’s been written.  
After a lifetime in the dark,  
the blind will see.  
The castoffs of society will be laughing  
and dancing in God,  
the down-and-outs shouting praise to  
The Holy of Israel.

### Reflection from Betsy Swank,

**St. Lawrence:** In this passage, the prophet Isaiah is offering encouragement to the exiled people of ancient Israel. He is trying to give them hope for a new day to come when they will again be able to celebrate joyfully with their loving God. As a people in exile in Babylon, being deprived of this relationship with God was as if their senses had been turned off; they were unable to hear, see or move. In their dismay, they felt as if God had never even been part of their lives.

Can we take these words to heart and challenge ourselves to fully embrace the world we live in? Where can we find hope in whatever exile we find ourselves? Can we awaken our senses in appreciation of our creator? Can we open our ears, focus our eyes and move our bodies to celebrate being the beloved creation of a loving God?

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 16, 17
- Isaiah 29: 17-24
- 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12



### Reflection from Piper Hodson,

**St. Lawrence:** Am I the prisoner? The bowed down? Am I the stranger, widow, or orphan? Have my eyes been opened or am I still blind? Am I righteous or wicked? I find this passage to be of comfort when I don't think about it too hard. Whatever troubles I am facing, the Psalmist seems to tell me that God has my back. Then I start thinking and realize that if I'm suffering frustration, it may be because I'm wicked rather than because I'm a prisoner or stranger. Sue Cromer's photographs of reflected stained glass in the National Cathedral inspire my approach to holding this scripture (and many others) in my heart. The picture isn't clear, but it's beautiful and inspires hope.

### An excerpt from Psalm 146:7-8

The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; The Lord loves the righteous; the Lord cares for the stranger; he sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

### MUSIC

*"Rejoice the Lord is King"*

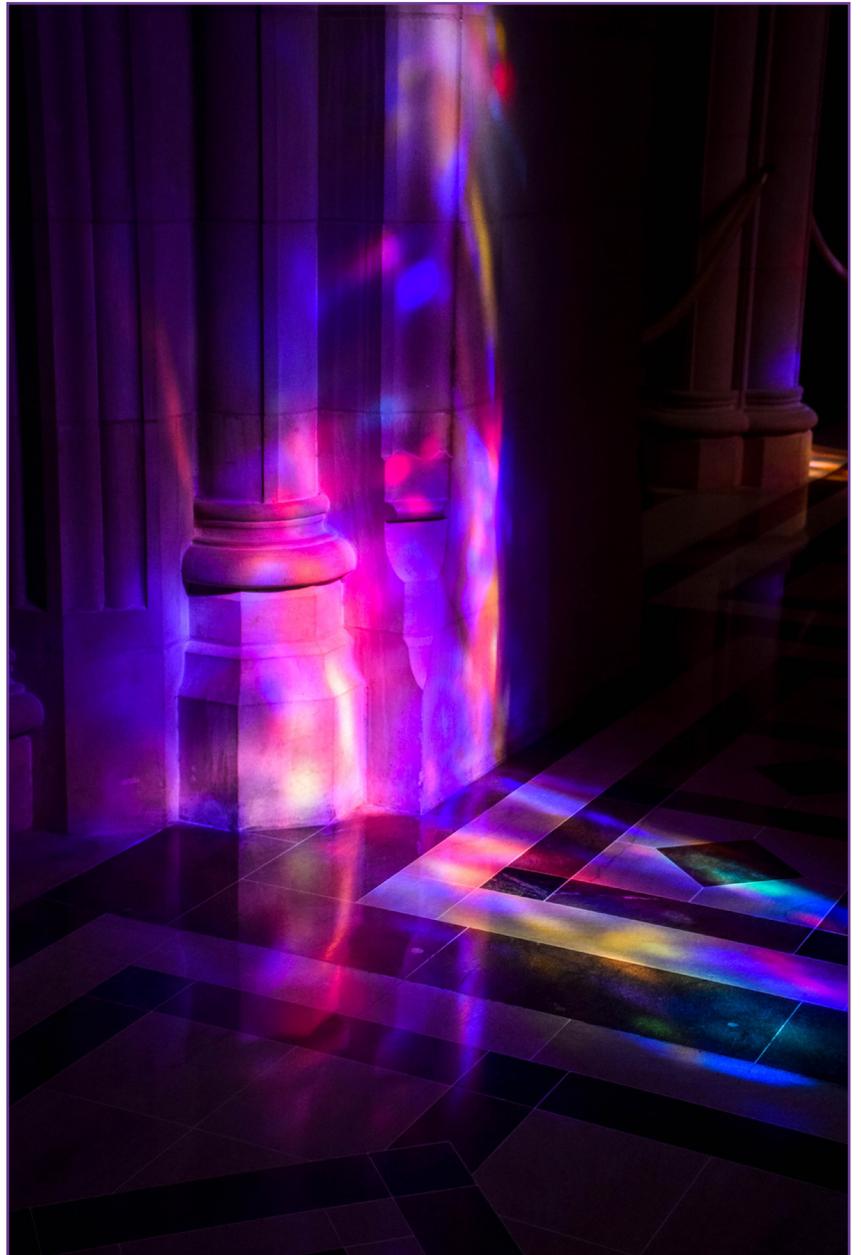
arr. Dan Forrest,  
sung by the StGs quartet

*"His kingdom cannot fail, he rules o'er  
earth and heaven; the keys of death  
and hell are to our Jesus giv'n."*

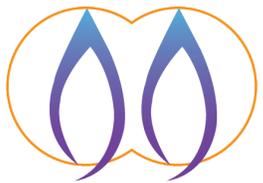
### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 146
- Isaiah 4:2-6
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18



Photograph by Sue Cromer of the stained glass in the National Cathedral



## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 4, 2022

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### Sunday worship at St. Elisabeth

8:00 am Traditional Language Holy Communion

10:00 am Inclusive Language Holy Communion

### Sunday worship at St. Gregory's

9:30am onsite AND online (Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube) –

worship with Eucharist, music, singing, and participation by people of all ages.

### Sunday worship at St. Lawrence

9:30am onsite AND online (Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube) –

worship with Eucharist, music, singing, and participation by people of all ages.

### Sunday worship at Trinity

9:00am in person sung Eucharist

11:00am Zoom service of readings and preaching with music

#### ■ Opening

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near! Let every hill and valley a level way appear. Greet one who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story. Oh blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name. -from the Hymn "Prepare the way..."

#### MATTHEW 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His

winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

#### ■ Prayers

Offer your intercessions for the world, the country, and our city.

Offer your intercessions for the church.

Offer your intercessions for the sick, sad, lonely, and afraid.

Offer your praise of joy and thanksgiving.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness

and to put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life,

in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;

that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty

to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal;

through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

#### ■ LORD'S PRAYER

#### ■ Going Out

Reveal among us the light of your presence that we may behold your power and glory. As we look for your coming among us this day, open our eyes to behold your presence and strengthen our hands to do your will, that the world may rejoice and give you praise.

#### ■ Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.



An excerpt from 1 Thessalonians 5:8b-11

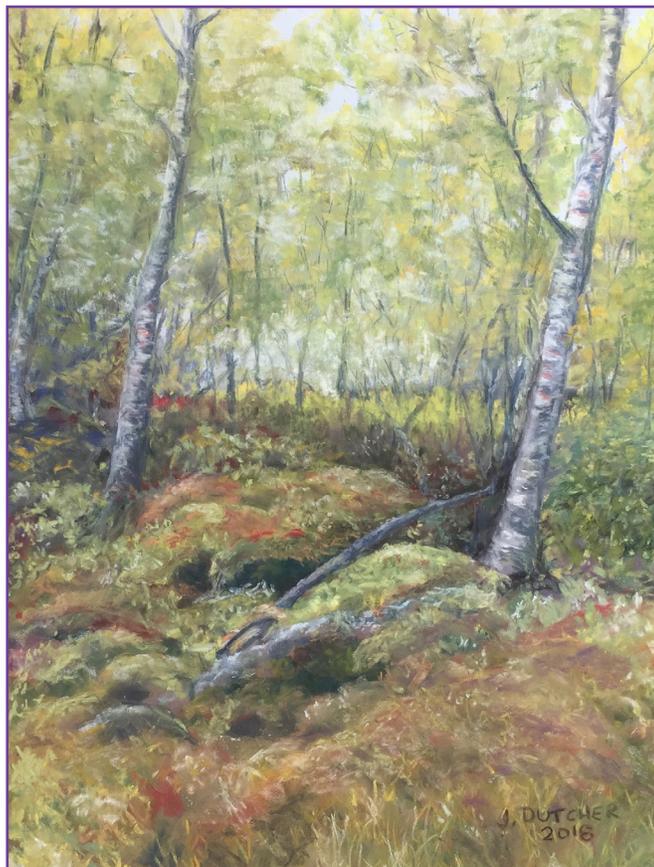
Let us...put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

MUSIC

“Soon We Will Be Done”

arr. Kyle Pederson

*“Soon we will be done with the troubles of the world when heaven comes to earth!”*



“Walk to the Glacier.” Painting by Jon Dutcher, St. Gregory’s

Reflection from Leigh Stewart,

**St. Gregory’s:** I am writing this the week before the midterm elections. For weeks I have read or seen attack ads by candidates and political parties. I have no doubt that however the elections turn out there are going to be numerous people who are angry about the outcomes. I think we’ve all seen a marked increase in anger and wrath in our public discourse, some of this from people who profess to be Christians. In the face of this I confess that I feel a great deal of despair and helplessness. This passage however gives me hope. God has not destined any of us for His wrath, but sent His Son to save us so that we may live each day with him. So if God does not want to send His wrath on me and my fellow sinners, who am I to want to send my wrath on anyone? This passage not only gives me hope, it gives me an action plan to keep me from despair and helplessness! What I can do is arm myself with faith and hope and love. Then whoever I encounter, especially those who hold different views than I do, regardless of what they say or do, I can find some way to encourage them and build them up. It isn’t easy and it takes practice but then, to quote Ghandi, I will “be the change I want to happen in the world.”

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 25
- Isaiah 5:8-12, 18-23
- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11



## TUESDAY – Pray without Ceasing

December 6, 2022 - Second Week of Advent

### An excerpt from 1 Thessalonians 5:15-18

See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

### MUSIC

#### “Exsultet”

by John Repulski,  
sung by the StGs quartet

*“Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels, and let your trumpets shout salvation for the victory of our mighty King.”*

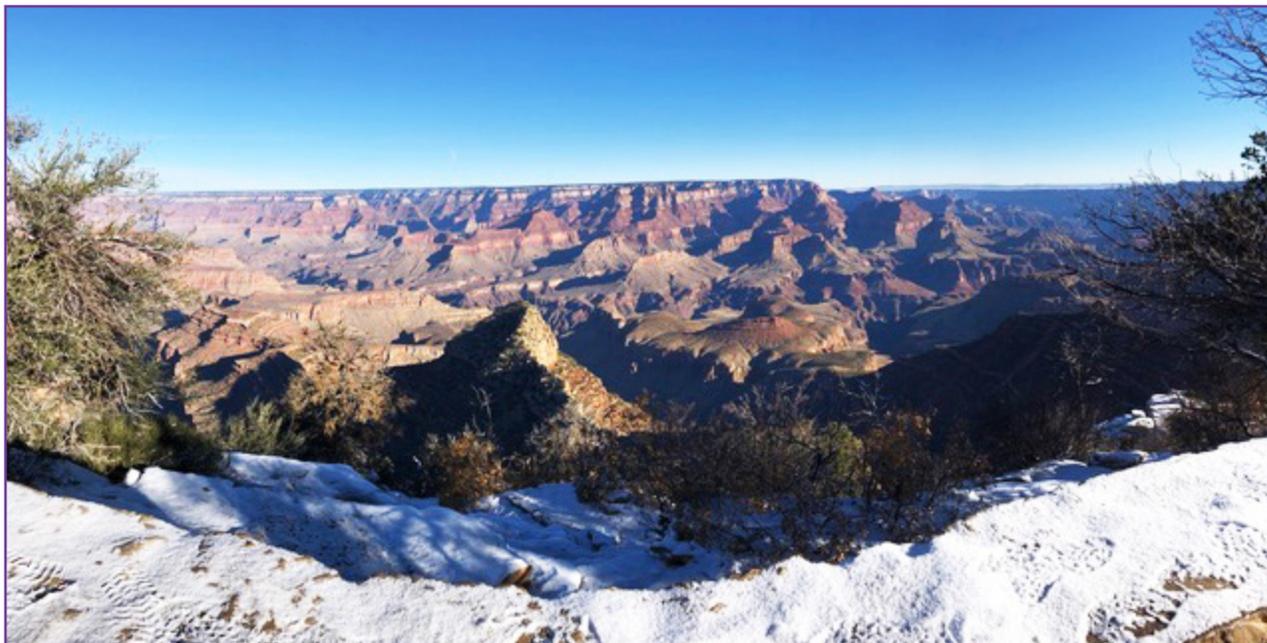
### Reflection from Meredith Woods

**Potter, St. Gregory’s:** I once presumed that to “pray without ceasing” required a spirituality to which only a nun or monk could aspire. After all, someday I couldn’t even manage Morning Prayer. Yet I now realize, especially within the context in which the instruction appears, that I can pray without ceasing by seeing life through “God-colored” glasses, being mindful of God’s presence in every aspect of my daily life. Recognizing our environment as God’s creation, seeing another as beloved of God, responding to injustice in our world are the means by which we can all begin to pray without ceasing.

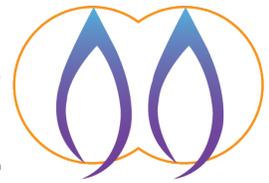
### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 26, 28
- Isaiah 5:13-17, 24-25
- 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28



“Grand Canyon in Snow.” Photography by Marilyn Knilians, St. Gregory’s



An excerpt from Isaiah 6:7-8

The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: 'Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'

**Reflection from Scott Hamilton, St Gregory's:** "Of all the prophets and authors of the Bible that give me guidance and comfort, the verses spoken by the Prophet Isaiah draws my interest. One of my favorite verses is Isaiah 40:29-31, which counsels those who are weary and weak will be given strength so that they can mount up on eagle's wings.

The Advent devotional (Isaiah 6:7-8), however, offers another favorite selection of verses that talks about forgiveness. It reminds me of the phrase my maternal grandparents would frequently say, quoting a Welsh saying, "If you are quick to anger, be quick to forgive." That message, along with Isaiah's words about forgiveness, brings solace to a world that rockets back and forth between anger and hatred. Whether a Welsh expression or Isaiah's words, I believe each compliments the other in a desire to heal a world that desperately needs faith, hope, healing, justice, dignity and compassion today.

Angel and Knight "Est rosarium praeipue implorando matris dei patrocini adversus hostes catholici nominis institutum." Leo XIII Photograph by Dan Nicholas, St Gregory's

MUSIC

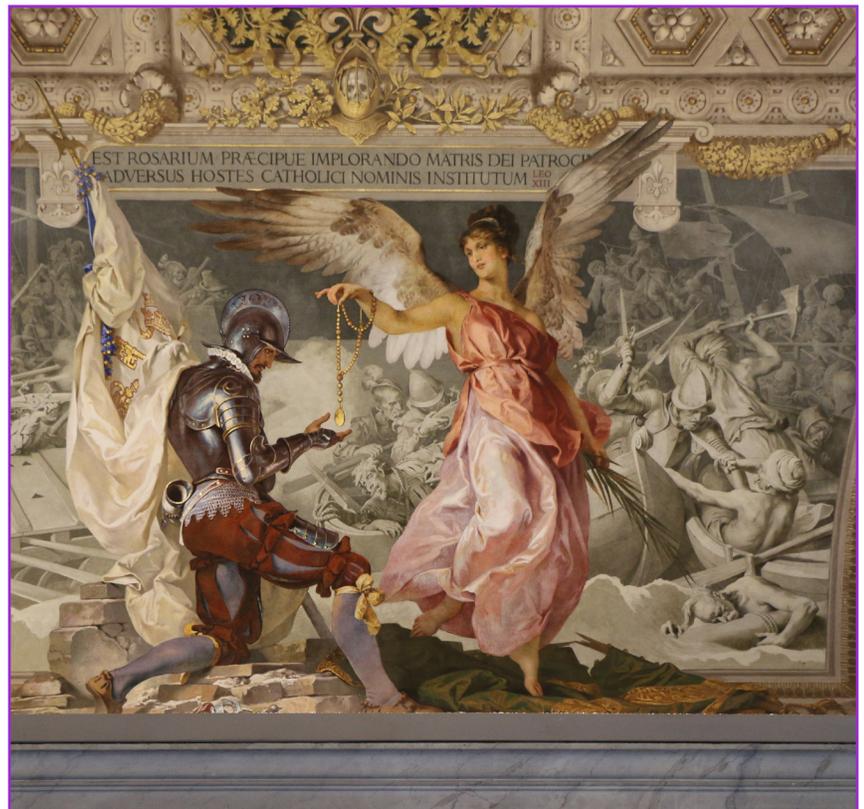
*"In the Year that King Uzziah Died"*  
by David Williams;  
sung by The Grace Cathedral Choir  
of Men and Boys

*"Lo, this hath touched thy lips,  
and thine iniquity is taken away  
and thy sin is purged."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 38
- Isaiah 6:1-13
- 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12





## THURSDAY – Stillness in God

December 8, 2022 - Second Week of Advent

### An excerpt from Psalm 37:7-9

Be still before the Lord \*  
and wait patiently for him.  
Do not fret yourself over  
the one who prospers, \*  
the one who succeeds in evil  
schemes.  
Refrain from anger, leave rage alone; \*  
do not fret yourself; it leads  
only to evil.

### MUSIC

*"O Rest in the Lord"*  
by Mendelssohn;  
sung by David Wigram

*"O rest in the Lord,  
wait patiently for him."*



Photograph of the indoor labyrinth last Advent.

### Reflection from Butler Sharpe,

**St. Gregory's:** God has provided everything that we need or require for our earthly journey. We should not have to devote ourselves to work for his love, joy and peace but rather to come into his presence to 'Be Still.' His unconditional love for us is enough.

As we enter into this Advent season, of anticipation and joyful expectation, let us also practice to be still. We can have complete union with Jesus. We will be transformed by his power into the one that he calls us to be.

*"In quietness and in confidence  
shall be your strength"*  
–Isaiah 30:15

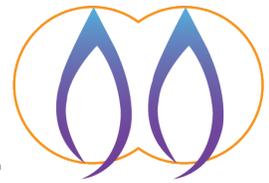
For the past three years, Stacy and I have witnessed the 'Stillness in God', as we have cared for a dear mother/wife with dementia. God's grace has provided much strength and calmness in this storm of life. The difficulties and circumstances are made easier by God's presence and his stillness.

So let us turn, from a path of activity and planning to the path of stillness. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 37:1-18
- Isaiah 7:1-9
- 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12



### An excerpt from Luke 22:19-20

Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'

### Reflection from Dan Nicholas,

**St. Gregory's:** After reading our passage, a flood of memories come to mind. The first is tradition that we remember Christ's sacrifice when celebrating the eucharist. Other memories relate to prior holiday celebrations where we've experienced the loss of a loved one who is no longer with us but in spirit. Our gatherings at the table help remind us that we are all one in Christ.

*The Rectors of St. Lawrence, St. Elisabeth, St. Gregory and Trinity celebrating the Eucharist*

### MUSIC

#### *"Panis Angelicus"*

by C.Franck;  
sung by Andre Rieu

Panis angelicus fit panis hominum (thus angels' bread is made the bread of man today)

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 31
- Isaiah 7:10-25
- Luke 22:14-30



## SATURDAY – God as Refuge

December 10, 2022 - Second Week of Advent

### An excerpt from Psalm 31:1-3

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge;  
let me never be put to shame; \*  
    deliver me in your righteousness.  
Incline your ear to me; \*  
    make haste to deliver me.  
Be my strong rock, a castle to  
    keep me safe, for you are my crag  
    and my stronghold; \*  
for the sake of your Name, lead me  
    and guide me.



### Reflection from Tina Calub,

**St Gregory's:** Life is unpredictable and messy and beautiful. In the times when we may feel alone or conflicted or unsure, we need to reach out to God. We need to lay our worries at God's feet and let him lead us out of the darkness. Just like an old friend, God is always ready to listen to us, guide us, and provide us shelter with his unfailing love.

### MUSIC

#### *"Spiegel im Spiegel"*

by Arvo Part,  
feat. Leonhard Roczek, cello

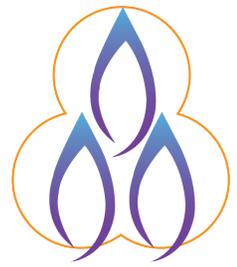
The title translates to "mirror in the mirror," and is a sublimely meditative piece of music on which one can reflect on God's love for us.

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 30-32
- Isaiah 8:1-15
- 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

*Photograph by Anne Jolly, St. Gregory's*



**Sunday worship at St. Elisabeth**

**8:00 am Traditional Language Holy Communion**

**10:00 am Inclusive Language Holy Communion**

**Sunday worship at St. Gregory's**

**9:30am onsite AND online (Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube) –**

**worship with Eucharist, music, singing, and participation by people of all ages.**

**Sunday worship at St. Lawrence**

**9:30am onsite AND online (Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube) –**

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**9:00am in person sung Eucharist**

**11:00am Zoom service of readings and preaching with music**

■ **Opening**

Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be afraid. For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, and he will be my Savior. -*Isaiah 12:2*

■ **MATTHEW 11:2-11**

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

"Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

■ **Prayers**

Offer your intercessions for the world, the country, and our city.

Offer your intercessions for the church.

Offer your intercessions for the sick, sad, lonely, and afraid.

Offer your praise of joy and thanksgiving.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

■ **LORD'S PRAYER**

■ **Going Out**

Reveal among us the light of your presence that we may behold your power and glory. As we look for your coming among us this day, open our eyes to behold your presence and strengthen our hands to do your will, that the world may rejoice and give you praise.

■ **Dismissal**

Let us bless the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.



## MONDAY – Faithfulness through Good Works

December 12, 2022 - Third Week of Advent

### An excerpt from 2 Peter 1:3, 5-7

Christ's divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. Christ's divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love.

### MUSIC



#### *"Guide me, Lord"*

Baritone solo by  
Suzy Born

"Guide me, Lord,  
where shall we go?  
Guide me Lord shall  
we sleep? Guide me  
Lord where shall we  
stay? Guide me, Lord,  
to a safe and quite  
place an Inn, a room  
somewhere, a place to  
rest is all that I ask."

Art by Victor Przysiezny, Trinity

### Reflection from Victor Przysiezny, Trinity:

In this passage, Peter sounds like an advice columnist. He tells us what to do to get everything we need for life and godliness. He gives us a list of deceptively simple words, one pretending to lead to the next, all great choices.

After reading them several times, I needed to find what each word says about me, about my relationship with Christ, with others, with you, with this world. This brought me to my dictionary (any poet will tell you that dictionaries are sacred), a Bible commentary, and even Google.

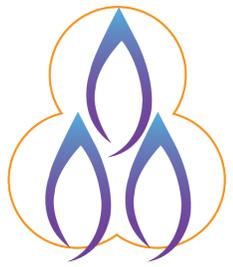
To do this, I will write each word on a piece of paper and fill up the page with all I think, feel, and learn. But wait, Peter paired the words up. How do each of these eight words interact with, change, and challenge each other? And now back we go.

I am overwhelmed by this and can't imagine that I'm getting it right. Peter calls me. Not alone, you are not alone. Share, challenge, help, love. Thoughts, hopes, prayers, dreams. More words. Peter's challenge is not to find answers to a word game, it's to find a deeper, God centered life, filled with awe, good works, and the most sacred of words, love. Together.

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 41, 52
- Isaiah 8:16-9:1
- 2 Peter 1:1-11



An excerpt from Isaiah 9:2, 4

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.  
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.  
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.

MUSIC

*“The Lord is My Shepherd”*

Thomas Matthews, sung by the choir of  
Trinity Episcopal Church, Tulsa, OK

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not  
want. He maketh me lie down in green  
pastures. He leadeth me beside the still  
waters. He restoreth my soul.”

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings  
assigned for today are:

- Psalm 45
- Isaiah 9:1-7
- 2 Peter 1:12-21



Photograph by Bill Baar, Trinity

**Reflection from Bill Baar,**

**Trinity:** Advent, the Christian New Year. A time of promise, of new beginnings. I’m looking forward to this Advent season and Christmas with new hope. After two years of no family gatherings, limited gatherings or gatherings canceled at the last minute because someone caught COVID, I’m hoping this year we can return to normal. Or what is the new normal. We will celebrate new family members while we pause to remember those who are missing. We’ve gone through a very dark time but with this Advent, this New Year comes a new light.



## WEDNESDAY – Preparing the Way for Christ

December 14, 2022 - Third Week of Advent

### An excerpt from Mark 1:1-3

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."



Matthias Grünewald (ca. 1480–1528), *John the Baptist* (oil on panel, 1510-1515) Museum Unterlinden Museum, Colmar, [www.artbible.info/art/large/193.html](http://www.artbible.info/art/large/193.html)

### Reflection from Whit Shepard,

**Trinity:** The season of Advent is a time of preparation, of anxious and excited waiting for what is to come. In our tradition, the Advent season is framed as a journey. The Bidding Prayer that begins the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols exhorts us: "in heart and mind let us go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass ..."

We know where this journey will end: with the glorious resurrection and ascension of Our Lord at Easter, for which Christmas itself is preparation. But where does it begin? Mark—the earliest and most succinct of the four gospels—tells us exactly. It is in the wilderness, and with a man who is wild in everything, including his message that repentance is the only way to prepare for What—and Who—is coming. As Jesus' messenger, John the Baptist is pointing the way we should go. For God's sake—and for ours—let us listen.

### MUSIC

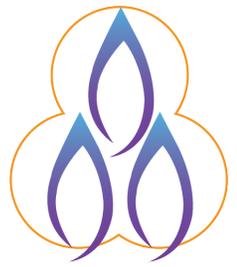
*"On Jordan's bank, the Baptist's cry"*

"On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry announces that the Lord is night. Awake and hearken for he brings glad tidings of the king of kings."

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 119:49-72
- Isaiah 9:8-17
- Mark 1:1-8



### An excerpt from Matthew 3:8-10

Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our ancestor”; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 50
- Isaiah 10:5-19
- Matthew 11:2-15

### MUSIC

*“The Color Green”*  
by Rich Mullins

“Be praised for all Your  
tenderness by these  
works of Your hands  
Suns that rise and rains  
that fall to bless and  
bring to life Your land  
Look down upon this  
winter wheat and be  
glad that You have made  
Blue for the sky and  
the color green that  
fills these fields with  
praise”

### Reflection from Jennifer Ould,

**Trinity:** Jesus wants us to bear “fruit worthy of repentance” – that is, a changed heart, mind, and life. He’s concerned about how easily we may assume that our heritage and traditions are enough, that we’ll just keep doing what’s worked before for others and miss out on living a life transformed by loving and following him.

Transformation is something that we know when we see it, but it looks different for each person. It’s personal. But we can know what its fruit will look like: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And if we’re the transformed tree? Well, that fruit we’re bearing isn’t for us, but for others to be nourished by and praise the Creator for.



Art by James Barwell, “Apple grove,”  
[www.flickr.com/photos/22888823@N00/67990059](http://www.flickr.com/photos/22888823@N00/67990059)



## FRIDAY – Signs of God’s Presence

December 16, 2022 - Third Week of Advent

### An excerpt from Matthew 11:2-6

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.’



Photography by Victor Przysiezny, Trinity

### Reflection from Hilary Junkin,

**Trinity:** Signs of God’s presence are all around us: in the rising sun, in a pastel sunset, the colors of Autumn, and certainly in the face of a newborn baby. But can we see God’s image in the dirty, disheveled, homeless person begging on the street corner? Or do our prejudices and stereotypical ideas keep us from seeing God where we do not expect God to be? If we anticipate and accept that God is everywhere in the world around us, if we believe in his miraculous powers, then we are open to seeing his presence in the everyday miracles.

Let us open our eyes today to see our loving God who is always with us and before us

### MUSIC

#### “Magnificat”

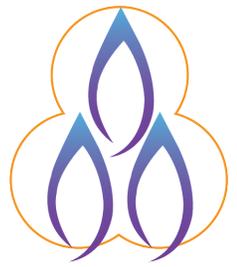
Advent soprano solo by Suzy Born

“My soul doth magnify the Lord... My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. Alleluia! So call me blessed!”

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 55
- Isaiah 10:5-19
- Matthew 11:2-15



**An excerpt from Psalm 139:1-3, 6**

O Lord, you have searched me  
and known me.  
You know when I sit down and  
when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from far away.  
You search out my path and my lying  
down, and are acquainted  
with all my ways.  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

**Reflection from Claire Esker,**

**Trinity:** There is an old Polish tradition that when the first star appears on Christmas Eve, a single candle is lit in a window and an extra place laid out for travelers who might need hospitality on a cold winter's night. The saying is: *Gość w dom, Bóg w dom* – "A guest in the house, God in the house." At Christmas, we have myriad traditions in which we make ourselves open and available to others, from charitable giving, volunteering, to age-old family traditions like the one described above. How, though, do we make ourselves available to Christ in this season? Christ is the eternal guest, the figure, as the old painting shows, perpetually knocking at the door that only we can open. What will you do for yourself this Advent to light a candle in the window of your heart, to set a place at the feast, and keep it all year?

*"Pierwsza Gwiazdka (First Star)," painting by Tadeusz Popiel (1863-1913), public domain image. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tadeusz\\_Popiel\\_Pierwsza\\_gwiazdka.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tadeusz_Popiel_Pierwsza_gwiazdka.jpg)*

**MUSIC**

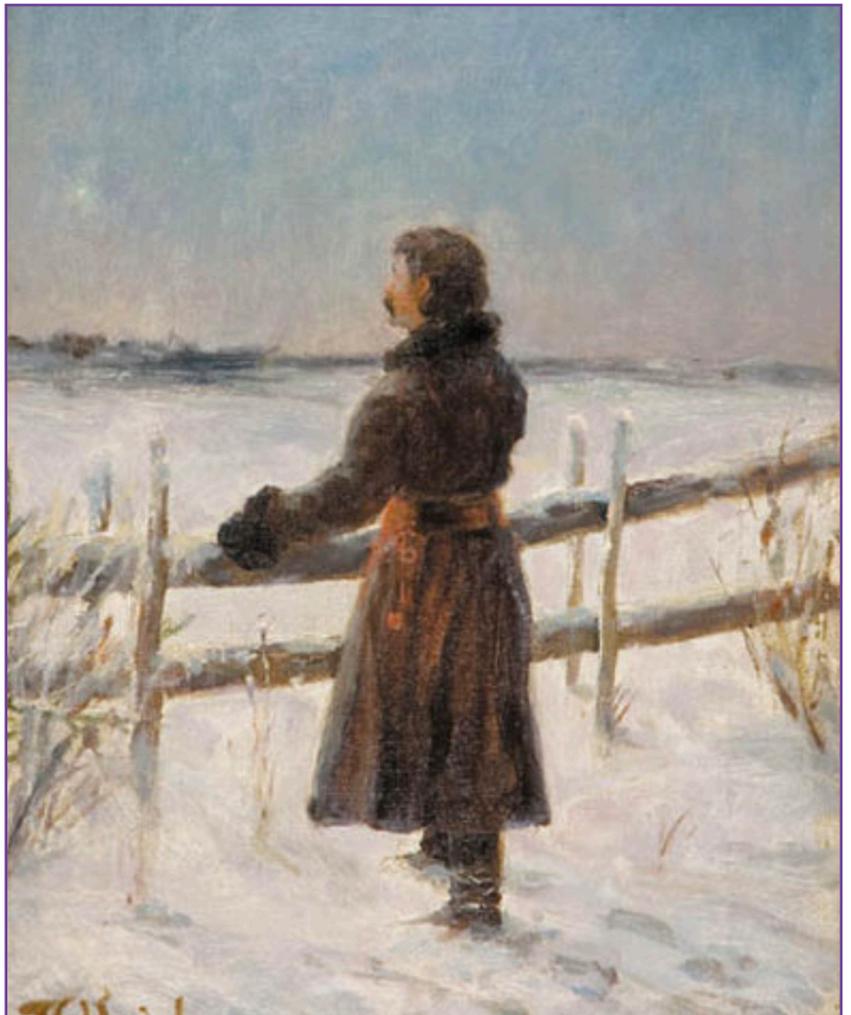
*"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"*  
by Alan Jackson

*"What a friend we have in Jesus  
All our sins and griefs to bear  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer"*

**ADDITIONAL READINGS**

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 138, 139:1-17
- Isaiah 10:20-27
- Jude 17-25





## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 18, 2022

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### Sunday worship at St. Elisabeth

8:00 am Traditional Language Holy Communion

10:00 am Inclusive Language Holy Communion

### Sunday worship at St. Gregory's

9:30am onsite AND online (Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube) –

worship with Eucharist, music, singing, and participation by people of all ages.

### Sunday worship at St. Lawrence

9:30am onsite AND online (Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube) –

worship with Eucharist, music, singing, and participation by people of all ages.

### Sunday worship at Trinity

9:00am in person sung Eucharist

11:00am Zoom service of readings and preaching with music

#### ■ Opening

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly  
servant.

From this day all generations will call me  
blessed: the Almighty has done great things  
for me, and holy is his Name. *-Luke 1:46*

#### ■ MATTHEW 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

#### ■ Prayers

Offer your intercessions for the world, the country, and our city.

Offer your intercessions for the church.

Offer your intercessions for the sick, sad, lonely, and afraid.

Offer your praise of joy and thanksgiving.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness

and to put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life,

in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;

that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty

to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal;

through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now

and for ever. **Amen.**

#### ■ LORD'S PRAYER

#### ■ Going Out

Reveal among us the light of your presence that we may behold your power and glory.

As we look for your coming among us this day, open our eyes to behold your presence and strengthen our hands to do your will, that the world may rejoice and give you praise.

#### ■ Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



An excerpt from Psalm 71: 1-8

In you, O Lord, I take refuge;  
let me never be put to shame.  
In your righteousness deliver me  
and rescue me;  
incline your ear to me and save me.  
Be to me a rock of refuge,  
a strong fortress, to save me,  
for you are my rock and my fortress.

MUSIC

“Storm”

by Lifehouse,  
sung by Kathryn Duncan

“How long have I been in this storm,  
so overwhelmed by the ocean’s  
shapeless form? ...  
And I will walk on water, and you will  
catch me if I fall.”

Photograph from Puerto Rico by  
Kathryn Duncan, St. Gregory’s

**Reflection from Kathryn Duncan, St Gregory’s:** In a world where we all are still suffering from the long-term effects of living through a global pandemic, it is easy to get overwhelmed. Just keeping our heads above water is exhausting, especially when we’re bombarded with endless waves of stress, negativity, grief, and fear. But in this psalm, we are reminded that there is no shame in needing help. There is no shame in asking for help. God is an unwavering constant, ever-present and ever-loving. God’s love is a fortress against the storm, so that even when we feel unmoored by the shifting world around us, we know that in God we can always find refuge.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 71:1-8
- Isaiah 11:1-9
- Revelation 20:1-10





## TUESDAY – God’s Favor

December 20, 2022 - Fourth Week of Advent

### An excerpt from Luke 1: 26-38

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.’



“Annunciation” by Patricia Brintle (2011)

### Reflection from Dillion Shipman,

**St Elisabeth’s:** I find myself struck that Mary is never said to be afraid by the visiting angel Gabriel. Instead, we learn that she is perplexed by his salutation: “Greetings, favored one. The Lord is with you.” I’m so intrigued by what the scripture says here... “Mary was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.” Mary would have known what it was like to experience the oppression of living an unfavored life; she was a woman in antiquity where women were seen as property. She was poor and lived under the rule of the cruel Roman Empire. It’s no wonder she would be so perplexed by someone calling her favored.

In this Gospel, God is not only announcing to Mary, but to all of us, that we are favored. Not because of our privilege or status or wealth. Not because of our resume or our powerful connections. We, like Mary, are favored because God loves us, created us with purpose, and honors the beautiful truths of who we are called to be. I wonder what all we might do and be and accomplish if we also could imagine those words addressed to us: “Greetings, favored ones. The Lord is with you.”

### MUSIC

*“The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”*  
(The Hymnal 1982 #265)

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 66. 67
- Isaiah 11:10-16
- Luke 1:26-38



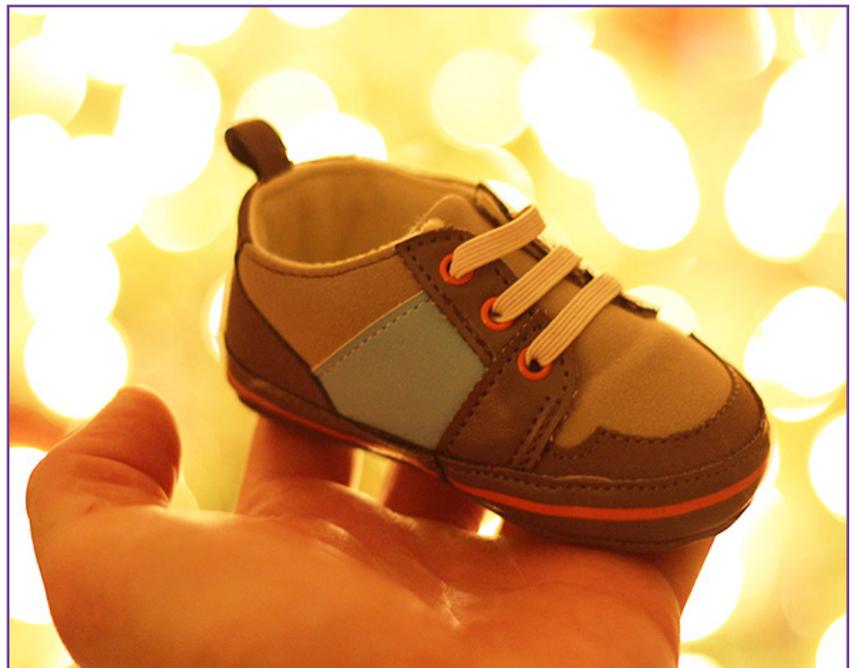
**An excerpt from Luke 1: 39-45**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.’

**ADDITIONAL READINGS**

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 72
- Isaiah 28:9-22
- Luke 1:30-45



**Reflection from Shelley Byrnes,**

**St Gregory’s:** I remember the first time I felt my daughter move inside me. It was a moment filled with joy and awe. I don’t care how much morning sickness and exhaustion a woman has, the minute she feels the baby move is the confirmation that the child is growing and healthy. Even more so for a woman like Elizabeth who was older and believed herself to be unable to have a child. I imagine her waiting and waiting for proof this child lived. I also imagine the joy Mary must have felt when Elizabeth acknowledged the holiness of her child. Both women, having both faith and doubt until they saw each other and there was confirmation that God’s plan was underway and using them just as God foretold. There is tremendous joy in a moment when we have confirmation that God is acting in our lives. No matter how small the moment: a hand on the cheek of a grandparent; the cooing of a baby in a church service; the comfort of an animal’s heart beating in time with ours; the hugs given by loved ones as they meet in an airport. Joy actually is all around.

**MUSIC**

*“Ave Maria”  
by A. Carrillo,  
sung by Kathryn Duncan*

*“Benedicta tu in mulieribus (blessed art thou among women)”*

*Photograph by Dan Nicholas, St. Gregory’s*



## THURSDAY – God’s Economy

December 22, 2022 - Fourth Week of Advent

### An excerpt from Luke 1: 52-53

“He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.”



“Annunciation,” *Our Lady of Pity*, Swaffham, UK

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 80
- Isaiah 329:13-24
- Luke 1:46-56

### Reflection from Bryan Cones, Trinity:

“Economy” is not a word that gets connected with “God” too much. It seems too earthly, too connected to money, even to business and industry. It just doesn’t have a spiritual ring to it. And yet, here in Mary’s song of praise to God, there is something very “economic” going on. In fact, it seems that God’s economy is all about “redistribution”—of power, of food, of honor, of money. The human economy favors the powerful and rich; God’s economy reverses the earthly one. Where do we find ourselves caught between God’s economy and the human one? And how do we live in that tension? It is perhaps not something we are eager to think about as Christmas draws near! Perhaps one of God’s Christmas gifts to us is the gift of discomfort with the way things are. When we unwrap it, we may discover some new way of helping God’s economy transform our human one.

### MUSIC

“Tell out my soul”

Timothy Dudley Smith

“Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might!

Powers and dominions lay their glory by;

Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight;

The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.”



**Reflection from Bryan Cones, Trinity:**

These words capture beautifully so much of our Christmas prayer: tender mercy, a new dawn, light in shadow, a path toward peace. The gospel of Luke places these words in the mouth of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, who had been unable to speak because he doubted God’s promise of a son (Luke 1:5-20). Have we ever found ourselves rendered “mute” before God, unable to pray because of doubt or worry? Have we had a moment of revelation, as when Zechariah saw his son born, when we were able to reclaim our prayer of thanksgiving and praise? Both doubt and revelation, after all, are important moments in the life of faith. Perhaps we can find some encouragement in our brother Zechariah: Sometimes it takes a minute for God’s already-on-the-way work to become clear to us. That’s OK – eventually that dawn will break upon us.

**An excerpt from Luke 1:78-79**

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

**MUSIC**

*“Benedictus”*

James Quinn, SJ  
arranged by Ralph Vaugh Williams

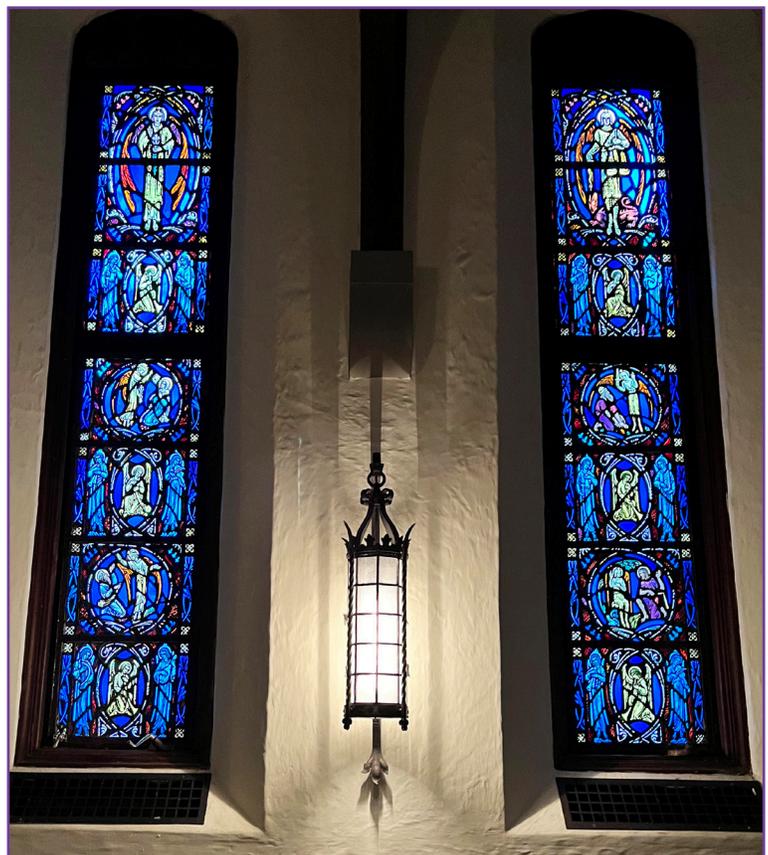
“O tiny child, your name shall be the prophet of the Lord.  
The way of God you shall prepare to make his coming known.  
You shall proclaim to Israel salvation’s dawning day, when God shall wipe away all sins in his redeeming love.”

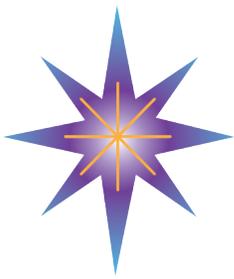
**ADDITIONAL READINGS**

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 93, 96
- Isaiah 29:13-24
- Luke 1:67-79

*Stained Glass in Trinity Church*





## CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2022

### An excerpt from Luke 1: 73-75

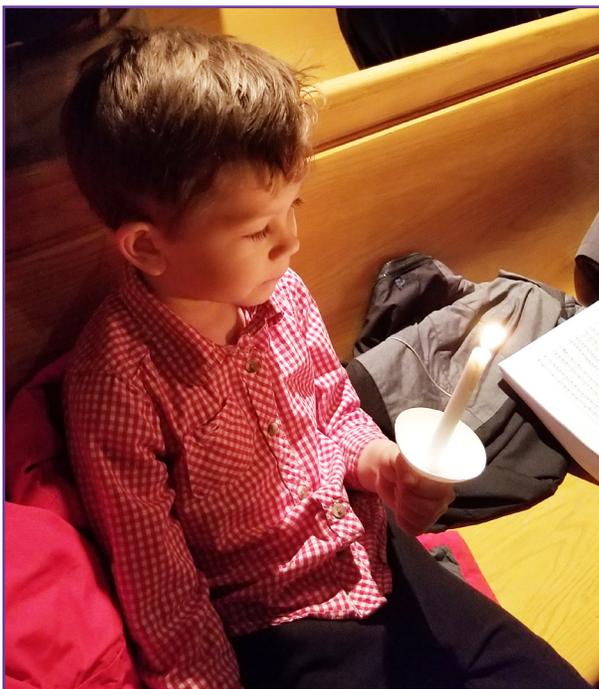
Thus God has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered the holy covenant, the oath that God swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before God all our days.

### MUSIC

#### *"The Sky Can Still Remember"*

by F. Ferko,  
sung by the StGs quartet

"The sky can still remember, that earliest  
Christmas morn,  
When in the cold December the Savior  
Christ was born.  
No star unfolds its glory, no trumpet wind  
is blown,  
But tells the Christmas story in music  
of its own.



### *Reflection from Anne Jolly,*

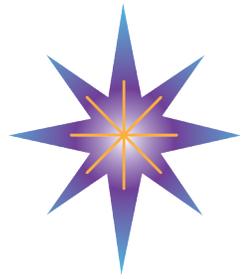
**St Gregory's:** How do we live without fear? I read passages like this and want them to be true. I want to be able to have fear banished, and holiness and righteousness resident within me all my days. On Christmas Eve, with Silent Night still echoing in my head, the vision of the congregation singing by candlelight filling my heart, and the anticipatory joy of the incarnation inspiring my soul, this seems possible. But then the news will come on the TV, or an alert will pop up on my phone, and I'll once again be afraid of what can and does happen. I'll say and do things that aren't even adjacent to holiness and righteousness. And even then - maybe especially then - God's mercy still reigns. The gift of the Christ child reminds us that fear, hatred, sin, death don't have the final word. Sure, they keep popping up. But God is ALWAYS alongside us, loving us, and pouring out grace and mercy as we repent and return. How are we aligning our lives to be turned towards God, God's peace, and God's love? These gifts are abundant and once they take hold within us, our actions can't help but be influenced by them. We can't live without fear on this side of Eternity, but we can remember that God's peace and love are stronger than any fear we can hold.

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 89:1-29
- Isaiah 59:15b-21
- Luke 1:67-79

*Photograph by Shelley Byrnes of Christmas Eve service at St. Gregory's*



- St Elisabeth:** Christmas Eve 4 pm – Pageant with communion and special Choral Eucharist and sermon  
Christmas Day 10 am – Morning Prayer with carols
- St. Gregory:** Christmas Eve 4 pm  
Christmas Day 9:30 am
- St. Lawrence:** Christmas Eve 4:30 pm – Carols  
8:00 pm – Service  
Christmas Day 9 am
- Trinity:** Christmas Eve 4pm

### ■ Opening

For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. *-Isaiah 61:11*

### ■ JOHN 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

### ■ Prayer

Offer your intercessions for the world, the country, and our city.

Offer your intercessions for the church.

Offer your intercessions for the sick, sad, lonely, and afraid.

Offer your praise of joy and thanksgiving.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

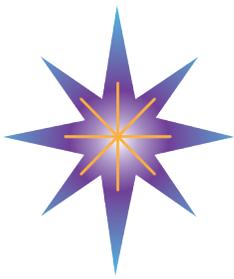
### ■ LORD'S PRAYER

#### ■ Going Out

Reveal among us the light of your presence that we may behold your power and glory. As we look for your coming among us this day, open our eyes to behold your presence and strengthen our hands to do your will, that the world may rejoice and give you praise.

#### ■ Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.



## MONDAY – Trust and Joy

December 26, 2022 - First Week of Christmas

### An excerpt from Psalm 28:8-9

The Lord is my strength and my shield;  
my heart trusts in God, and I have been  
helped; Therefore my heart dances for  
joy, and in my song will I praise God.



Photo by Benjamin Davies on Unsplash

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings  
assigned for today are:

- Psalm 28
- 2 Chronicles 24:17-22
- Acts 6:1-7

### Reflection from Kip Gasper,

**St Lawrence:** This passage seems so appropriate for the day after we have celebrated the birth of the Messiah that there seems nothing more to be said. A heart dancing for joy and songs of praise are what we have experienced since Christmas Eve. Consider though that we live in the time of the greatest help God could give his, the birth, life, death and resurrection of His Son. We celebrate secure in this knowledge.

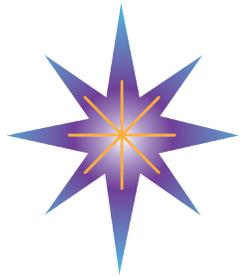
David wrote this Psalm about 1,000 years earlier. He writes of the trials and tribulations he and his people faced. Surely, he knew more perils would follow. I doubt he foresaw the greatest help from his strength and shield would appear as a baby born in such humble circumstances. Even so, he trusted God. He still testified of God's help. David's heart could dance and he could sing praises to God. As the Christmas celebrations fade into a new year, and the rhythms and ups and downs of daily life resume, can I remember to let my heart dance and sing songs of praise?

### MUSIC

#### "What Cheer"

by W. Walton,  
sung by The Cambridge Singers

"Now the King of heav'n his birth hath  
take,  
Joy and mirth we ought to make:  
Say each to other, for His sake: what  
cheer!



**An excerpt from Matthew 18:1-5**

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."

**MUSIC**

**"Go Tell it On the Mountain"**  
sung by the children of St. Gregory's and St. Lawrence, accompanied by Kirstie Felland

**ADDITIONAL READINGS**

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

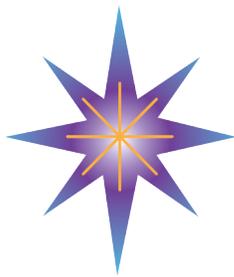
- Psalm 97-98
- Proverbs 8:22-30
- Matthew 18:1-14

**Reflection from Megan Agyeman**

**St Gregory's:** The scripture demonstrates how we are truly blessed with children who help us to see the world through their eyes. I try to remind myself that God is everywhere and I am grateful for my children's reminders. We visited the botanical gardens in early spring when the trees were bare and flowers had not yet bloomed and in my head was thinking we came too soon. After walking through my son exclaimed "that was amazing" and reminded me to see the world through their eyes that there was so much to appreciate. In our busy daily lives especially as we wrap up the year I find it important to ask how can I pause when I lose my grounding to remind myself of God's amazing presence in all things?



*Composite Photograph of the four seasons of the Sugar Maple at St Gregory's by Casey Kremer*



## WEDNESDAY – God’s Strength

December 28, 2022 - First Week of Christmas

### An excerpt from Isaiah 49:14-16

But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me,  
my Lord has forgotten me.  
Can a woman forget her nursing-child,  
or show no compassion for the child  
of her womb?  
Even these may forget,  
yet I will not forget you.  
See, I have inscribed you on the palms  
of my hands;  
your walls are continually before me.”

*One of the stained glass window in the Nave of Trinity Church, Highland Park, IL*



### Reflection from Annette Johnston, Trinity:

If you have been a parent, you know that it takes a special effort to let your child fail in order to learn. You don’t want a disastrous fail, and you hate to see them in pain. And yet, those failures are just what is needed to build their character.

We don’t have the “pre-story” to this reading, but we can surmise that Zion was in a wilderness of some kind after screwing up. All they can do now is to put one foot in front of the other to get things right again.

You can be sure that deep joy, love and celebration awaits as soon as they find their way. It is just so for us. If we are in the wilderness today, we have faith that joy beyond our expectation awaits in the future. When we have mastered our lesson, we will come right out of the wilderness.

### MUSIC

“Love Came Down at Christmas”

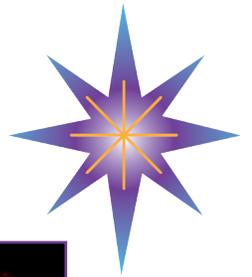
by Christina Rossetti,  
music by Suzy Born

“Love shall be our token, love be yours  
and love be mine. Love alone to God and  
neighbor, love for gift and plea and sign.”

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 2
- Isaiah 49:13-23
- Matthew 2:13-18



An excerpt from Isaiah 12:2

Surely God is my salvation;  
I will trust, and will not be afraid,  
for the Lord God is my strength  
and my might;  
God has become my salvation.

Reflection from Barb Schaper,

**St Gregory’s:** I have always needed the strength and might of God. There are crises all around me; health, economy, countries at war, etc. I have prayed to God to help us get through COVID without vaccines. God sent scientists with incredible knowledge and skills who developed vaccines for COVID and are constantly developing updated vaccines for many illnesses. I have the church to surround me with God’s words and deeds. I lean on family and friends to help me see the good in creation and other people. God is always with me, even when I don’t feel God’s presence.

MUSIC

“Light of the World”

by Karen Marriolli,  
sung by the StGs quartet

“Christ in your glory, come to light the way: teach us how to follow.”

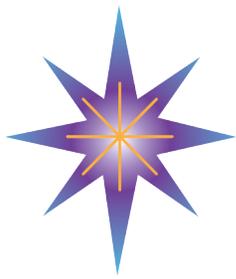


Stained glass from the choir loft of St. Gregory’s

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 18:1-20
- Isaiah 12:1-6
- Revelation 1:1-8



## FRIDAY – The Light of God

December 30, 2022 - First Week of Christmas

### An excerpt from Psalm 27:1

The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear? The Lord is the  
stronghold of my life; of whom shall  
I be afraid?

### MUSIC

“Her Beacon Hand” arr. Caroline Shaw  
sung by the StGs guest quintet

*“Give to me those yearning  
to breathe free, tempest-tost  
they cannot see what lies  
beyond the olive tree.”*



### Reflection from John Cecilia,

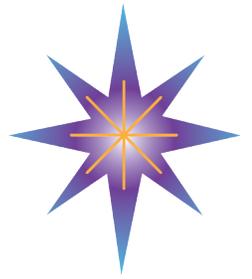
**St Lawrence:** Now in my 70s, I have come to understand and be thankful for how this piece of wisdom and strength has been following me for my entire life. Happenings that appeared to be limiting, or even catastrophic, have consistently turned out to be turning points in life that have taken me to higher planes of understanding, relationship or joy. In perhaps the earliest example, I was the only son of a divorced mother in the 1950s, essentially abandoned by my father. Yet I now realize that always quietly there was my grandfather, quiet, supportive, available, who by osmosis and occasional nudges helped me become much of who I am today, first professionally, then emotionally and empathetically. Again and again, life experiences that appeared to be disasters in the making have more often been turning points for growth and positive experiences. The rainbow often follows the thunderstorm. The Holy Spirit prevails.

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

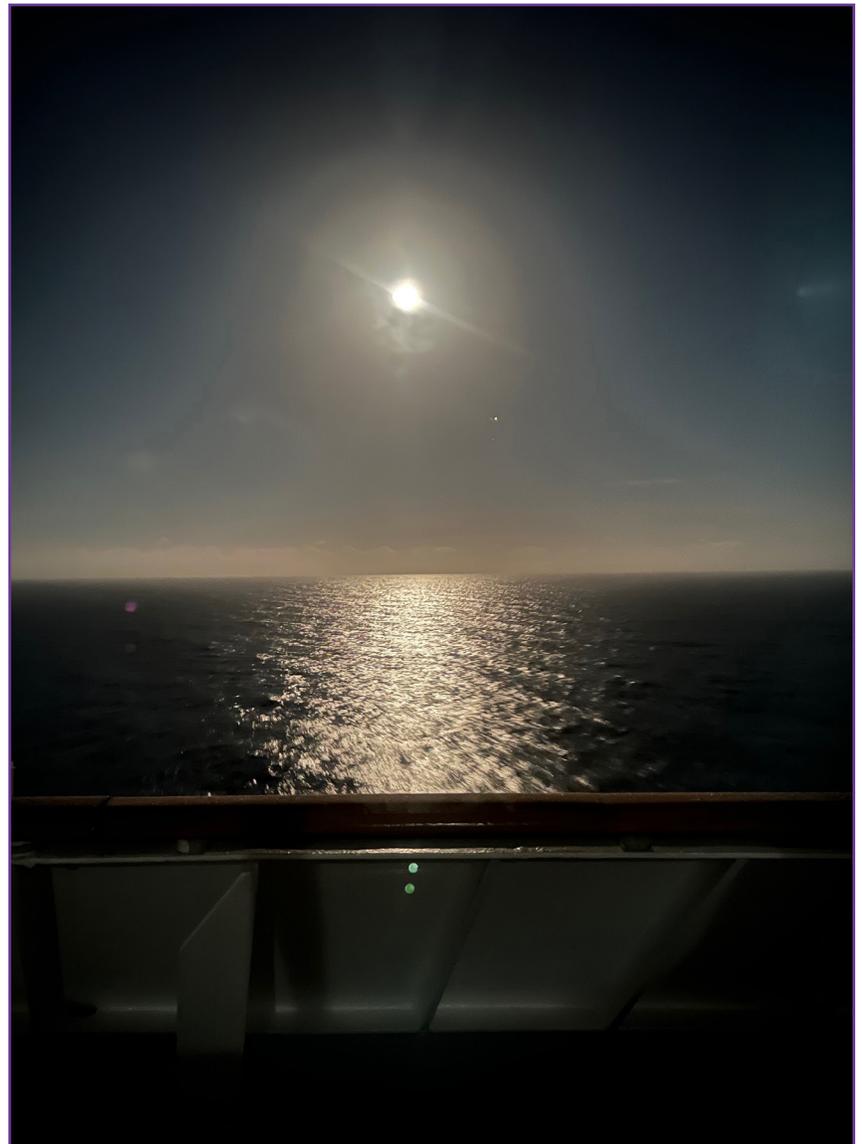
- Psalm 23, 27
- Isaiah 25:1-9
- Revelation 1:9-20

*Photograph by John Cecilia, St. Lawrence*



An excerpt from Genesis 12:1-3

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."



Photograph by Casey Kremer St. Gregory's

Reflection from Kathryn Duncan,  
St Gregory's:

In this excerpt, God promises that we can become a great nation. How do we help fulfill God's promise? In the music for today's devotional, the first verse says, "... where hate and fear divide us and bitter threats are hurled, in love and mercy guide us and heal our strife-torn world." Our nation is so divided right now that it feels impossible to identify those who lead in love and mercy rather than hate and fear. How do we, as individuals and a community, fulfill God's promise to become a blessing to the world? Perhaps it's because we just had elections, but I feel like that is the answer – we vote. We prayerfully research our candidates, and even when there's not a perfect choice we make the best choice possible. We can't just sit back and wait for God to make it happen – if we are God's hands in the world, it is our privilege to act accordingly.

MUSIC

"O God of Every Nation"

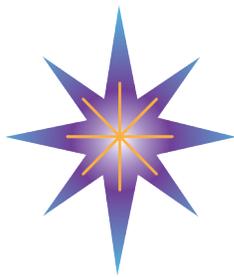
arr. John Ness Beck,  
sung by the StGs quartet

"Keep bright in us the vision of days  
when wars shall cease; when hatred and  
division give way to love and peace."

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 46, 48
- Genesis 12:1-7
- John 8:12-19



## THE HOLY NAME

January 1, 2023 - New Year's Day

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### Sunday worship at St. Elisabeth

8:00 am Traditional Language Holy Communion

10:00 am Inclusive Language Holy Communion

### Sunday worship at St. Gregory's

9:30am onsite AND online (Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube) –  
worship with Eucharist, music, singing, and participation by people of all ages.

### Sunday worship at St. Lawrence

9:30am onsite AND online (Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube) –  
worship with Eucharist, music, singing, and participation by people of all ages.

### Sunday worship at Trinity

9:00am in person sung Eucharist

11:00am Zoom service of readings and preaching with music

#### ■ Opening

Happy are they who dwell in your house!  
they will always be praising you.

Happy are the people whose strengths in you!  
whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.

-Psalm 84:3-4

#### LUKE 2:15-21

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. After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

#### ■ Prayers

Offer your intercessions for the world, the country, and our city.

Offer your intercessions for the church.

Offer your intercessions for the sick, sad, lonely, and afraid.

Offer your praise of joy and thanksgiving.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness

and to put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life,

in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;

that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty

to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal;

through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now

and for ever. **Amen.**

#### LORD'S PRAYER

#### ■ Going Out

Reveal among us the light of your presence that we may behold your power and glory.

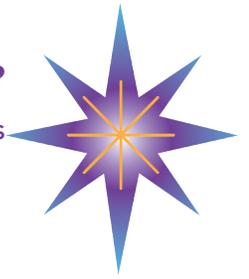
As we look for your coming among us this day, open our eyes to behold your presence

and strengthen our hands to do your will, that the world may rejoice and give you praise.

#### ■ Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



**Reflection from Jodie McCann, Trinity:**

Faith to me is unconditional love – love without judgement. Faith is community that picks me up when I cannot stand on my own. Faith is knowing that God is with me all the time. Faith is believing that God is good and true and strong. Faith is believing that God is leading me to a place where I need to be – even if, at first, I don't know why. Faith is believing that the why is not necessarily important as long as I am open to learning. Faith is knowing with every fiber of my being that I am never alone and that I am loved just as I am. Faith is welcoming the newly baptized into the community of God. Faith is believing that I will be OK even if my heart is breaking. It is a flowering crabapple tree and a bench on the lawn of Trinity Episcopal Church in memory of my beloved son. Faith is accepting life on life's terms. In the words of my lovely mother, whatever is, is.

**An excerpt from Hebrews 11:1-3**

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

**MUSIC**

*"Whenever God shines his light"*

by Van Morrison

*"Whenever God shines His light on me-*

*Open up my eyes so I can see  
When I look up in the darkest night  
And I know everything is gonna  
be alright"*

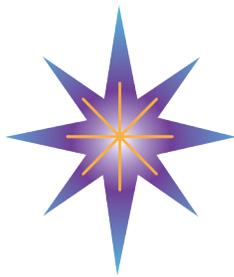
**ADDITIONAL READINGS**

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 34
- Hebrews 11:1-12
- John 1:19-28



Photograph on Tim's Bench



## Tuesday - God's presence

January 3, 2023 - Second Week after Christmass

### An excerpt from Genesis 28:16

Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!'



Photograph by Anne Jolly, St. Gregory's

### Reflection from Anne Jolly,

**St Gregory's:** Why do wonder and awe become less important to our lives as we grow older? How can we properly acknowledge and glorify God and God's works in the world without a generous helping of wonder and awe? Sometimes big, beautiful sights bring us back to this place – but I love it when the everyday, ordinary sights suddenly seem holy. Like Jacob, we find ourselves saying, "surely the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it!" This acknowledgement changes our whole perspective, bringing our focus to God's presence and not our own concerns. Each day I pray to glimpse God in the little things, so that my heart might focus more on wonder and awe than on my personal concerns.

### MUSIC

#### *"In the Beginning"*

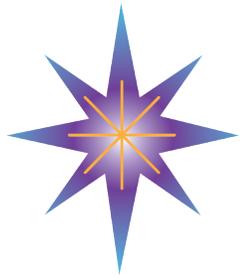
by Kyle Pederson,  
sung by the StGs quartet

"God spoke creation into being,  
And of the new creation God declared  
it good."

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 66, 67
- Genesis 28:10-22
- 1 John 2:12-17



### An excerpt from Exodus 3:1-3

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, ‘I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.’

### Reflection from Deborah DeManno,

**St Lawrence:** I reflect on this passage in late October, in an autumn when many declare our region’s leaf color to be one of the best in years. I’ve had several of my own blazing bush moments, being compelled to stop, turn, and be awestruck at this sugar maple tree or that flowering dogwood appearing afire with scarlet leaves and golden backlight. Actual brush fires are full of sounds – sucking air currents, crackling wood, whooshing embers spreading to the next helpless bush. But my moments amidst blazing yet not consumed trees are mostly silent, save for spent leaves crunching under foot or gently rustling overhead while trying to hang on to branches a little longer. My speech and thoughts are silenced as color envelopes me. Is this how the Creator catches our attention, impels us to silence, speaks to us in our hearts? Shhhhhhh. Listen for a holy voice.

*Photograph by Deborah De Manno, Trinity*

### MUSIC

#### *“The Burning Bush”*

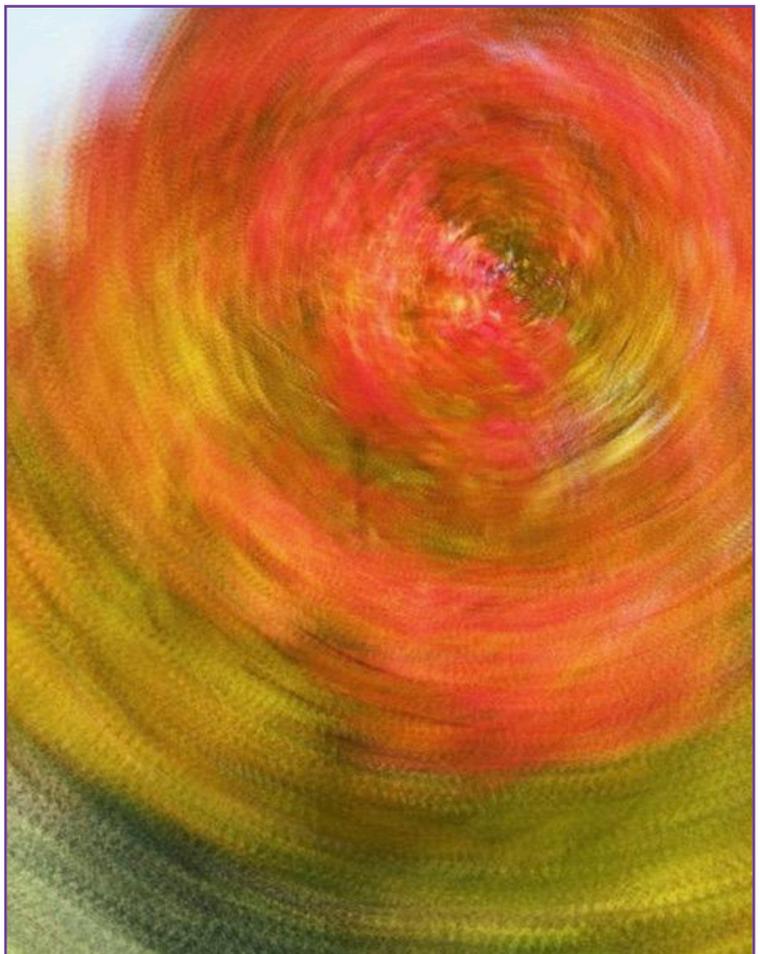
from the soundtrack of *The Prince of Egypt*  
by H. Zimmer

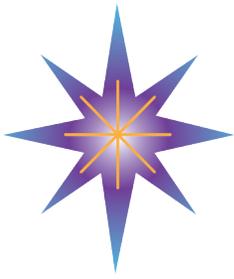
While this track from the original soundtrack has no text, Hans Zimmer did a masterful job of telling the story of Moses and the burning bush with just his music alone.

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 85-87
- Exodus 3:1-5
- Hebrews 11:23-31





## Thursday - Praise!

January 5, 2023 - Second Week after Christmas

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### An excerpt from Psalm 103:1

Bless the Lord, O my soul, \*  
and all that is within me, bless  
God's holy Name.



Photograph by Anne Jolly, St. Gregory's

### Reflection from Suzann Sladcik,

**St. Gregory's:** We all love to hear the words "well done" or "good job" on a creation that we have put an immense amount of effort in. To be praised is to be recognized and to be seen in all our glory, but when was the last time you took a moment and thanked God for all that he has created in our lives and in the world? When life can seem overwhelming, it can be a good time to stop and count your blessings. This verse reminds me to be grateful to God, who has given us all so much. Take a moment today and say a prayer of simple thanks to God similar to David in Psalm 103:1.

### MUSIC

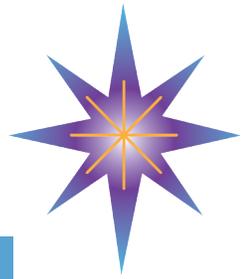
*"Blagoslovi Dushe Moya Gospoda"*  
from Rachmaninov's All Night Vigil

*"Blagoslovi dushe moya gospoda (bless the Lord, O my soul)"*

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 103
- Joshua 1:1-9
- Hebrews 11:32-12:2



## An excerpt from Revelation 21:22-24

I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

### Reflection from Brian Loshbough,

**Trinity:** This is the reading for Epiphany, just after Christ's birth, the time when the shepherds find out and visit, the Magi find out and visit, Mary and Joseph are amazed. But I'm a little confused. "Epiphany" means "sign," "visibleness," "fulfillment," "surprise," "awareness," "comprehension." Ah! So, THIS is that which will bring peace to the world, which will redeem us, which will make all things right! But it happens in a lowly stable, next to goats and cattle and straw...

And: Why is the reading from Revelation? This is a most difficult book to interpret and to understand. I think it is because there is, in Revelation, a description of the most wonderful Epiphany of the same Child – boldly and brazenly expressed. It describes great light and brightness: The Glory of God, the Lamb of God – CHRIST – illuminates the space, and it "has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, the glory of God is its light, its lamp is the Lamb." No need for sun or moon ...

We seek Epiphany. It might happen for you quietly and in a barnyard, or it may be tremendous and so bright that you won't even need the sun. Watch for it.

*Photograph of Trinity Church, Highland Park, IL  
by Victor Przysieszny, Trinity*

## MUSIC

*"Lo, the Angel of the Lord"*

Christmas by Suzy Born

"Fear not," said the angel, "for I bring you good tidings. For unto you to is born this day, Christ the Lord." And the glory of the Lord shown all around. And lo the angel of the Lord came upon them and said: "Glory to God, Glory to God in the highest, for Christ is born!" Angels will say, "Glory to, glory to, glory to God, and peace upon the earth."

## ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 46, 97
- Isaiah 52:7-10
- Revelation 21:22-27





**St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church**

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**St. Gregory's Episcopal Church**

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[parish@stgregoryschurch.org](mailto:parish@stgregoryschurch.org)



**St. Lawrence Episcopal Church**

125 West Church Street  
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847.362.2110  
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**Trinity Episcopal Church**

425 Laurel Avenue  
Highland Park, Illinois 60035  
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[office@trinitychurchhp.org](mailto:office@trinitychurchhp.org)