



# ST. GREGORY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

radiates God's grace, equipping all people to change the world.



12.20.23  
7pm

# longest night



## ***Welcome to St. Gregory's***

If this is your first time here, we invite you to take a Welcome Card from the pew holder, and place it in the basket at the back. All are truly welcome to participate in worship, and we believe our community is made stronger by your unique presence as we join in prayer.

## ***About This Evening's Service***

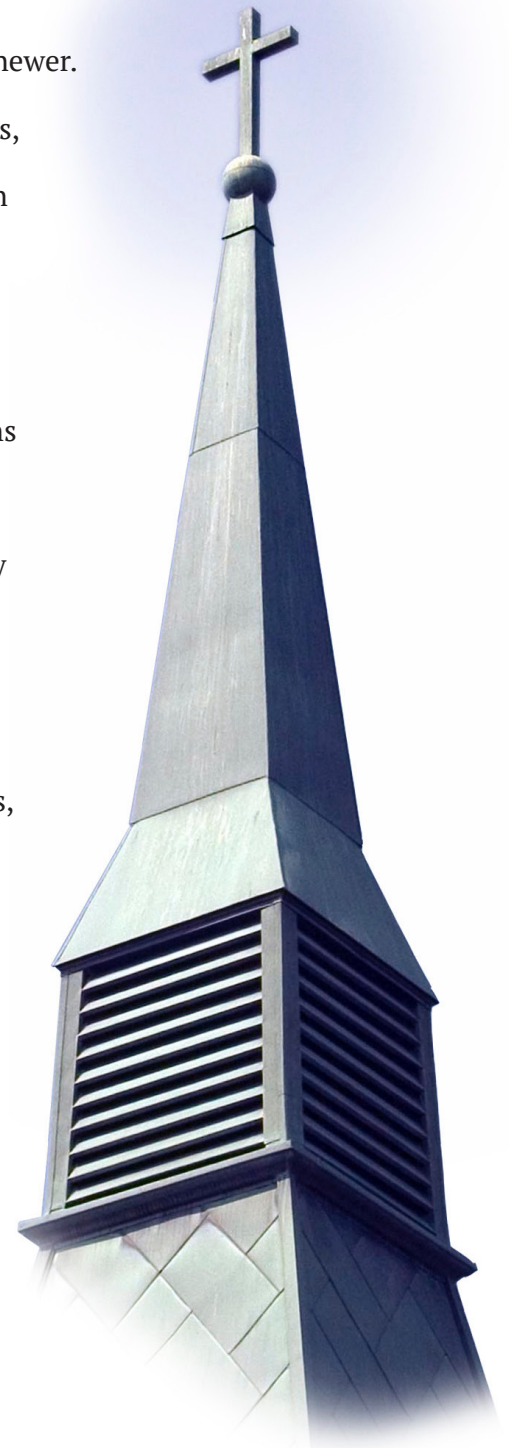
This evening's service combines two traditions: one older and one newer.

The older tradition is that of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, a service of scripture readings interspersed with Christmas carols. The first Lessons and Carols was held in 1880 and planned by Edwin White Benson, bishop of Truro in Cornwall, England. Because the cathedral was still under construction, this first service was held in a barn – perhaps fitting for Christmas. Strange to imagine, but this service was rather radical when first conducted because Christmas carols were not considered appropriate for church worship. Carol singing was regarded as a secular practice, as neighbors sang carols while going around to each other's houses in holiday spirits. Lessons and Carols spread across England and became most popularly associated with King's College, Cambridge, which held its first Festival in 1918. Lessons and Carols at King's continues to be an annual tradition broadcast around the world every Christmas. Many Episcopal congregations in the U.S. observe Lessons and Carols as either an Advent or Christmas celebration.

The newer tradition we observe this evening is that of Longest Night services. Such services are designed to be an alternative or supplement to traditional Christmas services. The purpose is to acknowledge and validate feelings of sadness, despair, hopelessness, powerlessness, and doubt – even or especially during a season associated with joy and merriment.

Our service this evening intersperses seven scriptures of lament with hymns of longing and hope based on seven sources of suffering. For each, we will light a candle and lift our prayers. At the conclusion of our service, we will offer anointing with laying on of hands and sacred oil.

Whatever feelings you carry this evening and this season, tonight's service is for you: for the validation of your struggles, for the comfort that such struggles are woven into our most ancient wisdom, for the healing that comes from bearing suffering with others. We cannot always fix what afflicts us, but knowing that we don't walk alone makes all the difference.





*Prelude*

*Avery Sujkowski, guitar*

## ***Bidding***

Beloved friends in Christ, in this season of Advent,  
it is our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the Angels,  
and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem, to see the Babe lying in a manger.

But that road to Bethlehem is often too dark to traverse,  
and the joys of this holy season are obscured  
by distresses of mind and spirit  
by death and grief  
by isolation and loneliness  
by injury and illness  
by oppression and injustice  
by war and violence  
and by the compassion and helplessness we feel for all those who suffer in this world.

Yet it is into such brokenness that the Holy Child is born.  
It is for the sake of such a world, torn apart by sin, that the Savior has come to us.

Let us therefore, before the remembrance of the joy of his birth,  
first spend this evening in remembrance of those in most need of God's saving help.

Let us join our voices of lament with sages and saints from ancient times,  
and, with hymns of longing, let us prepare our hearts to receive the Christ Child once  
again.

And, that we may know that we are not left helpless even now,  
let us be anointed by the healing balm of the Holy Spirit,  
who is promised to all those who call upon the Name of the Lord for help.

On this longest night, may Almighty God bless us with grace;  
Christ give us the joys of everlasting life;  
and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all.

**Amen.**



## ***The First Candle***

We light this candle to remember those who are captive to the powers which corrupt and destroy God's beloved creation, those lost in the night of addiction; those who suffer from untreated mental illness; those for whom short days bring depression; and those who, for whatever reasons, struggle to feel the joy they long for during this season.

O come, Emmanuel,  
**And disperse the gloomy clouds of night.**

### **Lesson**

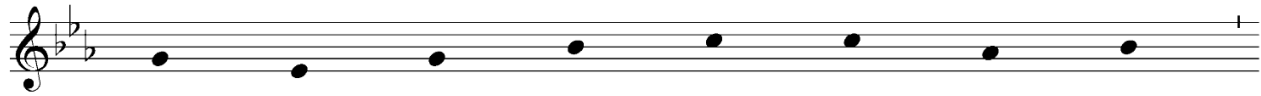
**from Psalm 69**

Save me, O God,  
for the waters have risen up to my neck.  
I am sinking in deep mire,  
and there is no firm ground for my feet.  
I have come into deep waters,  
and the torrent washes over me.  
I have grown weary with my crying;  
my throat is inflamed;  
my eyes have failed from looking for my God.  
Let not the torrent of waters wash over me,  
neither let the deep swallow me up;  
do not let the Pit shut its mouth upon me.  
Answer me, O LORD, for your love is kind;  
in your great compassion, turn to me.  
Hide not your face from your servant;  
be swift and answer me, for I am in distress.  
As for me, I am afflicted and in pain;  
your help, O God, will lift me up on high.  
I will praise the Name of God in song;  
I will proclaim his greatness with thanksgiving.  
This will please the LORD more than an offering of oxen,  
more than bullocks with horns and hoofs.  
The afflicted shall see and be glad;  
you who seek God, your heart shall live.

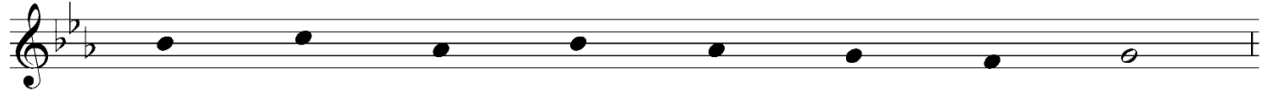


Carol

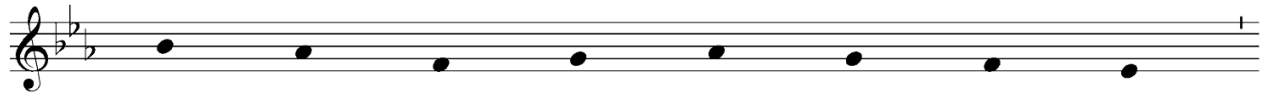
Creator of the Stars of Night



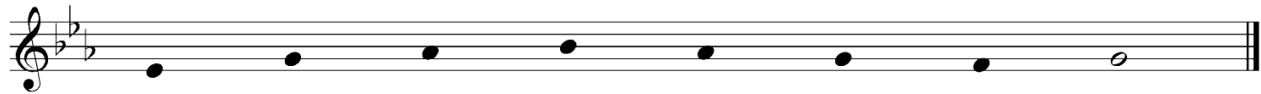
1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night,  
 2 In sor - row that the an - cient curse  
 3 When this old world drew on toward night,  
 5 Come in your ho - ly might, we pray,



1 your peo - ple's ev - er - last - ing light,  
 2 should doom to death a u - ni - verse,  
 3 you came; but not in splen - dor bright,  
 5 re - deem us for e - ter - nal day;



1 O Christ, Re - deem - er of us all,  
 2 you came, O Sa - vior, to set free  
 3 not as a mon - arch, but the child  
 5 de - fend us while we dwell be - low



1 we pray you hear us when we call.  
 2 your own in glo - rious li - ber - ty.  
 3 of Ma - ry, blame - less mo - ther mild.  
 5 from all as - saults of our dread foe.

Collect

Let us pray.

*The people stand, as they are able.*

Blessed Jesus, in the comfort of your love, we lay before you the memories that haunt us, the anxieties that perplex us, the despair that frightens us, and our frustration at our inability to think clearly. Help us to discover your grace in our mental distresses and know your peace, which exceeds all understanding, that your light might shine brightly from within us for ever more. **Amen.**

*The people sit.*



## ***The Second Candle***

We light this candle to remember those who have died and those who mourn their beloved dead, whose grief is sharpened by the returning of this festive season and for whom the gloom of winter nights brings a longing for days past.

O come, Emmanuel,  
**And death's dark shadow put to flight.**

### **Lesson**

### **from Lamentations 3**

I am one who has seen affliction  
under the rod of God's wrath;  
he has driven and brought me  
into darkness without any light;  
against me alone he turns his hand,  
again and again, all day long.  
He has walled me about so that I cannot escape;  
he has put heavy chains on me;  
though I call and cry for help,  
he shuts out my prayer;  
he has blocked my ways with hewn stones,  
he has made my paths crooked.  
He has filled me with bitterness, he has sated me with wormwood.  
He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes;  
my soul is bereft of peace;  
I have forgotten what happiness is.  
But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:  
The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,  
his mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.  
For the Lord will not reject forever.  
Although he causes grief, he will have compassion  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love;  
for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone.



Carol

Savior of the Nations, Come

1 Sa - vior of the na - tions, come! Vir - gin's  
 3 Thus on earth the Word ap - pears, grac - ing  
 4 Come, O Fa - ther's sav - ing Son, who o'er

Son, make here your home. Mar - vel now, both  
 his cre - a - ted spheres; hence to death and  
 sin the vic - tory won. Bound - less shall your

heaven and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.  
 hell de - scends, then the heaven - ly throne a - scends.  
 king - dom be; grant that we its glo - ries see.

Collect

Let us pray.

*The people stand, as they are able.*

Grant, O God, to all who are bereaved the power of your Spirit, that they may have strength to meet the days to come with steadfastness and patience, especially with themselves; neither denying their sorrow nor despairing without hope, but in thankful remembrance of your great goodness given in their loved ones. Melt away the guilt and regrets of those who survive; make possible whatever forgiveness is needed; and let those who now rest, rest in peace. And this we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ, who weeps for us and raises us to new life, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*The people sit.*



## ***The Third Candle***

We light this candle to remember those who are lonely and isolated; those who feel cut off from others; those who are far from home and loved ones; and those who struggle to build and maintain relationships.

O come, Emmanuel,  
**And cheer us by thy drawing nigh.**

### **Lesson**

**from Psalm 13**

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me for ever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?

How long shall I have perplexity in my mind,  
and grief in my heart, day after day?  
How long shall my enemy triumph over me?

Look upon me and answer me, O LORD my God;  
give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death;

Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"  
and my foes rejoice that I have fallen.

But I put my trust in your mercy;  
my heart is joyful because of your saving help.

I will sing to the LORD, for he has dealt with me richly;  
I will praise the Name of the Lord Most High.





**Carol**

**Abide With Me**



1. A - bide with me; fast falls the e - ven - tide,  
2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day;  
3. I need Thy pre - sence ev' - ry pas - sing hour;



The dark-ness dee - pens; Lord, with me a - bide.  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glo - ries pass a - way;  
What but Thy grace can foil the temp-ter's pow'r?



When o - ther hel - pers fail, and com-forts flee,  
Change and de - cay in all a-round I see;  
Who like Thy - self my guide and stay can be?



Help of the help - less, O a - bide with me!  
O Thou who chang - est not, a - bide with me!  
Thro' cloud and sun - shine, O a - bide with me!

**Collect**

Let us pray.

*The people stand, as they are able.*

Almighty God, whose Son had nowhere to lay his head: Grant that those who live alone may not be neglected in their solitude, but that, following in his steps, they may find and be found through the love of neighbors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The people sit.*



## ***The Fourth Candle***

We light this candle to remember those who are ill or injured; those frustrated by a body that no longer works as it once did; those who desire healing and wholeness; those who desire peace with and acceptance of their condition; and those who are dying.

O come, Emmanuel,  
**And close the path to misery.**

### **Lesson**

**from Psalm 102**

LORD, hear my prayer,  
and let my cry come before you;

hide not your face from me in the day of my trouble.  
Incline your ear to me;  
when I call, make haste to answer me,

For my days drift away like smoke,  
and my bones are hot as burning coals.

My heart is smitten like grass and withered,  
so that I forget to eat my bread.

Because of the voice of my groaning  
I am but skin and bones.

I have become like a vulture in the wilderness,  
like an owl among the ruins.

I lie awake and groan;  
I am like a sparrow, lonely on a house-top.

My days pass away like a shadow,  
and I wither like the grass.

But you, O LORD, endure for ever,  
and your Name from age to age.

In the beginning, O LORD, you laid the foundations of the earth,  
and the heavens are the work of your hands;

They shall perish, but you will endure;  
they all shall wear out like a garment;  
as clothing you will change them, and they shall be changed;

But you are always the same,  
and your years will never end.

The children of your servants shall continue,  
and their offspring shall stand fast in your sight.



Carol

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming




1 Lo, how a Rose e'er bloom-ing from ten - der stem hath sprung!  
 2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the Rose I have in mind,  
 \* 3 O Flower, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet - ness fills the air,



Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as seers of old have sung.  
 with Ma - ry we be - hold it, the Vir - gin Mo - ther kind.  
 dis - pel in glo - rious splen - dor the dark - ness ev - ery - where;



It came, a blos - som bright, a - mid the  
 To show God's love a - right, she bore to  
 true man, yet ve - ry God, from sin and



cold of win - ter, when half spent was the night.  
 us a Sa - vior, when half spent was the night.  
 death now save us, and share our ev - ery load.

Collect

Let us pray.

*The people stand, as they are able.*

O God, look with mercy on all who suffer from injury and disease. Let your healing touch bring wholeness, even if not cure — peace, even if not victory. Restore hope to the desolate, give rest to the weary, comfort the sorrowful, abide with the dying; and give to all of us that final victory over the sting of death, when Christ shall come to welcome us into that City where pain will be no more; for the sake of his love we pray. **Amen.**

*The people sit.*



## *The Fifth Candle*

We light this candle to remember the persecuted, the poor, the hungry, and the homeless; those who are made powerless by the powerful; those who fight for justice but encounter only resistance; and for ourselves, interwoven and implicated in systems so large and complicated that reforms seem impossible to us.

O come, Emmanuel,  
**May we trust thy mighty power to save.**

### **Lesson**

### **From Job 19**

Even when I cry out, "Violence!" I am not answered;  
I call aloud, but there is no justice.  
God has walled up my way so that I cannot pass,  
and he has set darkness upon my paths.  
God has stripped my glory from me,  
and taken the crown from my head.  
God breaks me down on every side, and I am gone,  
he has uprooted my hope like a tree.  
God has kindled his wrath against me,  
and counts me as his adversary.  
God's troops come on together;  
they have thrown up siege-works against me,  
and encamp around my tent.  
O that my words were written down!  
O that they were inscribed in a book!  
O that with an iron pen and with lead  
they were engraved on a rock for ever!  
For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;  
and after my skin has been thus destroyed,  
then in my flesh I shall see God,  
whom I shall see on my side,  
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.



## **Carol**

*I proclaim the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit finds joy in God, my Savior,  
for he has looked upon his servant in her lowliness.  
Ages to come shall call me blest!  
How holy the maker of all things,  
and ageless is his mercy on those who fear him,  
for he has shown his strength and power,  
scattering the proud.  
Ages to come shall call me blest!  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and raised the lowly to high places,  
and to the poor he gives all good things;  
the rich he sends away,  
guiding his children forever!  
He has upheld Israel, his servant,  
ever mindful of his mercy.  
And of the promise to our parents,  
his word is ever true,  
guiding his children forever.*

## **Magnificat** by Paul Tate

## **Collect**

Let us pray.

*The people stand, as they are able.*

Look with compassion and holy anger, O heavenly Creator, upon the people in this land and in all lands who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Forgive us and have mercy upon us all. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to our neighbors. Strengthen those who give their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. And grant that every one of us may enjoy an equitable portion of the riches of this land and this planet; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

*The people sit.*



## ***The Sixth Candle***

We light this candle to remember those afflicted with war and violence, for combatants and civilians; for peoples divided by history, culture, religion, and injustice; for those who helplessly watch from afar as their loved ones live in danger; for those who have only known a life of violence; and for all who heal, feed, and shelter others in warzones.

O come, Emmanuel,  
**And be thyself our King of Peace.**

### **Lesson**

**from Jeremiah 14**

Let my eyes run down with tears night and day,  
and let them not cease,  
for the maiden daughter—my people—  
is struck down with a crushing blow,  
with a very grievous wound.  
If I go out into the field, look—  
those killed by the sword!  
And if I enter the city, look—  
those sick with famine!  
For both prophet and priest ply their trade throughout the land,  
and have no knowledge. ...  
Why have you struck us down  
so that there is no healing for us?  
We look for peace, but find no good;  
for a time of healing, but there is terror instead.  
We acknowledge our wickedness, O Lord,  
the iniquity of our ancestors,  
for we have sinned against you.  
Do not spurn us, for your name's sake;  
do not dishonor your glorious throne;  
remember and do not break your covenant with us.  
Can any idols of the nations bring rain?  
Or can the heavens give showers?  
Is it not you, O Lord our God?  
We set our hope on you, for it is you who do all this.



Carol

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

1 Come, thou long- ex - spect - ed Je - sus, born to  
 2 Born thy peo - ple to de - li - ver, born a

set thy peo - ple free; from our fears and sins re -  
 child and yet a king, born to reign in us for -

lease us; let us find our rest in thee. Is - rael's  
 e - ver, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring. By thine

strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the  
 own e - ter - nal Spi - rit rule in all our

earth thou art; dear De - sire of ev - ery  
 hearts a - lone; by thine all - suf - fi - cient

na - tion, Joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.  
 me - rit raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Collect

Let us pray.

*The people stand, as they are able.*

Eternal God, in whose perfect reign no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: Send your Holy Spirit to the peoples of Israel and Palestine, to Ukraine and Russia, to Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Libya, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen, and all the many other places and peoples afflicted by violence. By your Spirit and through our efforts, grant that war will cease, suffering will cease, injustices will cease, hatred will cease. Give your comfort to those who fear and mourn for family and friends caught in the violence. Gather as one all peoples of the world as your children, beloved of their one Creator and in whose image each of us is wonderfully made. We ask this for the sake of your Love. Amen.

*The people sit.*



## ***The Seventh Candle***

We light this candle to remember those whose hearts are heavily burdened by the sinful state of the world and the suffering born by so many; for all of us when we lose the light of hope in the nighttime of this mortal life.

O come, Emmanuel,  
**And ransom your captive people.**

### **Lesson**

**from Isaiah 9**

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.  
For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onwards and for evermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.





Carol

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

It came up - on a mid - night clear, that glo - ri - ous song of  
 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un -  
 But with the woes of sin and strife the world has suf - fered  
 And ye, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing  
 For lo! the days are hast - 'ning on, by proph - et seen of  
 old, from ang - els bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of  
 furred, and still their heav - en - ly mus - ic floats o'er all the wear - y  
 long; be - neath the an - gel - strain have rolled two thou - sand years of  
 low, who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and  
 old, when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore -  
 gold: "Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heav - en's all -  
 world; a - bove its sad and low - ly plains, they bend on  
 wrong; and man, at war with man, hears not the love - song  
 slow, look now! for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly  
 told when peace shall ov - er all the earth its an - cient  
 gra - cious King." The world in sol - emn still - ness lay, to  
 hov - er - ing wing, and ev - er ov - er its Ba - bel sounds the  
 which they bring; oh hush the noise, ye men of strife, and  
 on the wing. O rest be - side the wear - y road, and  
 splen - dors fling, and the whole world send back the song which  
 hear the an - gels sing.  
 bless - ed an - gels sing.  
 hear the an - gels sing.  
 hear the an - gels sing.  
 now the an - gels sing.

Collect

Let us pray.

*The people stand, as they are able.*

Stir up your power, O Lord. Stir up your mercy and your compassion. Stir up your grace and your love. Stir up your church, and with mighty gentleness come among us. Do not forget the promises you have made to our ancestors. Do not forget their laments nor their dreams. Come speedily to deliver us. Come to wipe away every tear. Come to restore the earth. Come to break the bar and the rod and the yoke and the chains. O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel. **Amen.**

*Please remain standing.*



## *The Service of Healing*

Beloved, Holy Scripture gives us words to cry out to God in lament. Holy Scripture also teaches us that Jesus was born to restore wholeness of mind, body, and spirit to all who are afflicted. To his church, he has given the ministry of healing, by laying hands upon the suffering and anointing them. Let us therefore pray for the grace to perform this ministry, as we call down the Holy Spirit.

### **Blessing of the Oil**

O Lord, holy Creator, giver of health and salvation: Send us your Holy Spirit.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

To kings and prophets, you gave your blessing by the outpouring of oil.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

The holy apostles anointed the multitudes who were sick and healed them.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

Our ancestors received this holy unction in times of distress,  
trusting in your faithfulness.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

By this oil and the laying on of hands,  
may we know again your love and presence in our suffering.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

By this holy fellowship, may we be lifted up again to your service.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

By the mystery of the birth of Jesus our Savior, may we be raised to newness of life.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

Sanctify this oil, Almighty God, that all who are anointed with it  
may be healed, strengthened, and renewed by the power of your Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

### **Laying On of Hands and Anointing**

*You may be seated, unless you would like to come forward to receive laying on of hands and anointing. If you wish to receive laying on of hands but no oil, please cross your arms over your chest as you approach the priest.*

*For those attending the service online, you may pray the following:*

God of all comfort, our very present help in trouble, be near to me. Look on me with the eyes of your mercy; comfort me with a sense of your presence; preserve me from the enemy; and give me patience in my affliction. Restore me to health, and lead me to your eternal glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



### Taize During Anointing

With - in our dark-est night, you kin - dle the fire that ne - ver dies a -  
 way, ne - ver dies a - way. With - in our dark-est night, you kin - dle the  
 fire that ne-ver dies a - way, , ne-ver dies a - way. With-in our dark-est

*p* *mf* *p* *pp* *fine* *pp* *fine*

### Concluding Prayer

Let us pray.

*The people stand, as they are able.*

**Generous God, we give you thanks  
 for your beloved Jesus Christ,  
 in whom you have shared  
 the beauty and pain of human life.  
 Look with compassion upon all for whom we pray,  
 and strengthen us to be your instruments of healing in the world,  
 by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### Blessing

May the One who creates and restores everything that is,  
 the One who is Mary's child and child of God,  
 the One who is the Holy Spirit,  
 May this Holy One bring you compassion and peace,  
 and bless your lives with joy.

**Amen.**



Carol

In the Bleak Midwinter

1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,  
 2 Our God, heaven can - not hold him, nor earth sus - tain;  
 4 What can I give him, poor as I am?

earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;  
 heaven and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign:  
 If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb;

snow had fal - len, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble - place suf - ficed  
 if I were a wise - man, I would do my part;

in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.  
 the Lord God in - car - nate, Je - sus Christ.  
 yet what I can I give him - give my heart.

Dismissal

*The Priest dismisses the people, and the people respond,*

Thanks be to God.



## ***Mental Health Resources***

### **988 - Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (24/7)**

If you or a loved one are experiencing a mental health crisis you may call or text **988**, the 24-hour Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. You will be connected to the closest possible crisis center in your area. Dial 2 for Spanish.

### **SAFE2HELP (24/7)**

In the absence of a trusted adult, Safe2Help Illinois offers students a safe, confidential way in which to share information that might help prevent suicides, bullying, school violence or other threats to school safety. This program is not intended to suspend, expel, or punish students. Rather, the goal is to get students to "Seek Help Before." Safe2Help Illinois has developed a Mental Health Toolkit aimed at changing the culture in Illinois schools while also providing the resources to help parents and educators reinforce the components of this program.

**Call 844-4-SAFEIL (723345) | Text SAFE2 (72332) | [Safe2helpil.com](https://www.safe2helpil.com)**

### **Illinois Warm Line (Mon - Sat, 8a-8p, except holidays)**

If you or one of your family members has mental health and/or substance use challenges and would like to receive support by phone, call the Illinois Warm Line at **866-359-7953**. Wellness Support Specialists are professionals who have experienced mental health and/or substance use recovery in their own lives. They are trained in recovery support, mentoring, and advocacy and are ready to listen and support you. The Warm Line is not a crisis hotline, but is a source of support as you recover or help a family member to recover.

### **National Helpline (24/7)**

Free and confidential treatment referral and information service available for substance abuse and mental health services. **1-800-622-4357 (HELP)**

### **Crisis Text Line (24/7)**

The Crisis Text Line serves anyone, in any type of crisis. Trained crisis counselors will respond and help you.

**Text HELLO to: 741741**

### **The Trevor Project (24/7)**

Confidential assistance by trained counselors focuses on suicide prevention among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth.

**Text "Start" to 678-678**

**To talk to a live person on the line 1-866-488-7386**





# *first coming*

by Madeleine L'Engle

He did not wait till the world was ready,  
till men and nations were at peace  
He came when the Heavens were unsteady  
and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.  
He came when the need was deep and great.  
He dined with sinners in all their grime,  
turned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were pure.  
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.  
To a world like ours, of anguished shame  
He came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,  
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.  
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh  
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane  
to raise our songs with joyful voice,  
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,  
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!



# Advent at StGs



## Fourth Sunday of Advent | Sunday, December 24

9:30am | **ONLINE ONLY**

Since the fourth Sunday of Advent falls on Christmas Eve this year, we'll worship together at our usual time - but on Zoom only.

# Christmas Eve & Christmas Day at StGs

## Christmas Eve Service | Sunday, December 24

4:00pm | onsite/online

Intergenerational festive Eucharist with special music (brass quintet and percussion!) and abundant flowers, held both onsite and online

## Christmas Morning Service | Monday, December 25

10:00am | onsite/online

Come as you are (PJs welcome!) for this celebration of Christ's birth with Eucharist, held both onsite and online

*If our service times don't quite work for you this year or you'd like even more opportunities to celebrate, please join one of our partner congregations!*

## Fourth Sunday of Advent | Sun, Dec 24

St. Elisabeth - 8am, 10am onsite

St. Lawrence - 9am onsite

## Christmas Eve Late Service | Sun, Dec 24

St. Elisabeth - 9pm

## Christmas Morning Service | Mon, Dec 25

St. Lawrence - 9am



**The Rev. Dan Puchalla,**  
Priest-in-Charge  
dan@stgregoryschurch.org

**The Rev. Max Smith,**  
Deacon  
max@stgregoryschurch.org

**Anita Tasher,**  
Accounting Minister  
anita@stgregoryschurch.org

**Kathryn Kinjo Duncan,**  
Music & Engagement Minister  
kathryn@stgregoryschurch.org

**Vocalists:**  
Viki Rill, Kathryn Kinjo Duncan,  
Cameo Humes, Keanon Kyles

**Casey Kremer,**  
Communications Director  
sexton@stgregoryschurch.org

**Wardens:**  
Susan Hitch-Zint, Jim Millspaugh

**Vestry:**  
Sarah Kettlewell, Jon Dutcher,  
Sudi Johnson, Jill Polzin,  
Butler Sharpe, Val Seilheimer

**Pastoral Care Visitors:**  
Susie Dutcher, Fran Ingram,  
Sudi Johnson, Marjie Koons,  
Val Seilheimer, Cissy Singleton