



# ST. GREGORY'S

## EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Radiates God's Grace, Equipping All People to Change the World.

**Rector**, Anne B. Jolly  
anne@stgregoryschurch.org

**Family Minister**, Shelley Byrnes,  
shelley@stgregoryschurch.org

**Music Minister**, Kathryn Duncan  
kathryn@stgregoryschurch.org

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

**Organist**, Kirstie Felland  
kirstie@stgregoryschurch.org

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

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

**Parish Administrator**,  
Charlene Vanderhulst  
parish@stgregoryschurch.org

**Deacon Emeritus**, Dennis Lietz

**Vicar Emeritus**,  
Meredith Woods Potter

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

**Vestry**,  
Dan Nicholas, Warden  
Susan Zint, Warden  
Curtis Baddeley, Sudi Johnson,  
Don Kiva, Jill Polzin,  
Mary Rodgers, Butler Sharpe

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

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**St Gregory's Episcopal Church**  
815 Wilmot Road, Deerfield 60015  
847-945-1678  
www.stgregoryschurch.org

## First Sunday after Christmas

December 26, 2021

9:30am



[Link to the Sunday Bulletin online.](#)



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### Welcome to St Gregory's

If you are visiting, we invite you to take a Welcome Card from the pew holder, and if you are willing, fill it out and put it in the Offering Plate or give it to a greeters so that we might thank you for worshipping with us. 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 and communion.

### Our Worship

In the Episcopal Church, we often say that praying shapes believing, so how we worship in word and action shapes how we believe and respond to God. We are physical creatures made in God's image, and the physical nature of our worship helps us to connect more fully to God. Therefore, at St. Gregory's, we change our liturgy during each liturgical season to help us more fully embrace the theology and tone of the season.

Our sacred time of worship includes several different activities: singing, listening, praying, and feasting. This liturgy is enriched by the participation of everyone in the room. Some people choose to manifest prayers in physical ways to center their hearts and minds on God's presence in their lives and in the worship – we call these actions "manual acts." Bowing one's head at the name of Jesus reminds us that Jesus is the King of Kings, and he rules from a place of humility. There are several points during the liturgy, where many people cross themselves by touching their head, chest, and each shoulder (left then right) to remind themselves that God is in their head, heart, and in all of their actions in the world. These points in the liturgy are marked with this symbol **(+)**. At the declaration of the Gospel, many people make the sign of the cross with their thumb on their forehead, lips, and heart as the Gospel is announced. This action is a prayer asking God's word to be in our minds, our words, and in our hearts. This is indicated by the symbol **(+++)**. Generally speaking, we stand to pray, kneel to confess, and sit to hear. Regardless of what others are doing, how you physically worship is up to you and how you experience God. Your presence and participation is what matters most to God.

### The Season of Christmas

The twelve days of Christmas constitute the twelve days following Christmas, including the Sundays after Christmas, before the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th. We continue our celebration by rejoicing in God incarnate as the word made flesh – God present among us manifesting the entirety of the Word that is God. John's gospel (always our gospel reading for the 1st Sunday after Christmas as well as Christmas Day) starts with a statement so grand, so mind-bending, so extraordinary that we cannot but rejoice that God is so much more than we could ever ask or imagine. Our worship this season is joyful, but simple – just as Christ's beginnings are on earth. We have appropriately beautiful music with our favorite Christmas hymns, abundant decorations with resplendent white vestments to remind us of the abundance that is God, and prayers that remind us of the joy and mystery that is God incarnate.



## THE WORD OF GOD



*We begin our worship by observing a period of quiet to slow ourselves and rest in God's presence.*

*The people stand, as they are able.*

### CONGREGATIONAL HYMN (Verses 1 & 2)

God rest you merry, gentlemen

1 An - gels we have heard on high, sing - ing sweet - ly through the night,  
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why these songs of hap - py cheer?  
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;  
4 See him in a man - ger laid whom the an - gels praise a - bove;

and the moun-tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their brave de - light.  
What great bright-ness did you see? What glad tid - ings did you hear?  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.  
Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love.

*Refrain*

Glo - - - - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - - - -

We begin our worship by gathering together as the body of Christ, and acknowledging our participation together in the Body of Christ. The Presider invites us to praise God together, and many people choose to cross themselves at the mention of the Trinity. The Collect for Purity allows us to acknowledge that the ability to celebrate the liturgy depends on God's grace.

### OPENING ACCLAMATION p. 355, Book of Common Prayer

- Celebrant      Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (+)  
People          **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**
- Celebrant      Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Song of Praise: (this is USUALLY the Gloria, or Lord have mercy upon us...) The song of praise is an acclamation by all of us together in praise of God. In the Christmas season, it makes sense that our praise joins the angelic chorus.

## GLORIA (Verses 1 &amp; 3)

Angels we have heard on high

1 An - gels we have heard on high,  
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee?  
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see  
4 See him in a man - ger laid

sing - ing sweet - ly through the night,  
Why these songs of hap - py cheer?  
him whose birth the an - gels sing;  
whom the an - gels praise a - bove;

and the moun-tains in re - ply  
What great bright-ness did you see?  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee  
Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid,

ech - o - ing their brave de - light.  
What glad tid - ings did you hear?  
Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.  
while we raise our hearts in love.

*Refrain*

Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo -

We are invited to pray, and then the collect collects our prayers together in a single concluding prayer. The opening collect is tailored toward the church season. The season of Advent is a four-week season of expectation and waiting for the coming of Christ at Christmas and again to bring God's Kingdom to fruition. In this season, we are called to prepare our hearts to be places where the Christ child could be born anew and find a welcome home.

## THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



We follow a three-year cycle of readings called a Lectionary. These are the lessons being heard in congregations from many denominations throughout the world on this day. The first reading is from the Hebrew Scriptures, which tell us the story of God's love and faithfulness to God's people from the beginning of time to just before Christ.

The Psalm is a hymn or poem. The psalms cover the whole range of the relationship between God and God's people. The Book of Psalms, while a "book" of the Bible, consists of 150 hymns intended to be sung.

**FIRST READING**

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

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.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch.

The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give.

You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Word of the Lord.

People      **Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM 147:13-21**

First cantor, then all:

Wor-ship the Lord, O Je - ru - sa - lem, O praise your God, O Zi - on.

Cantor: He has strengthened the bars of our gates,  
He has blessed your children within you.  
He has established peace on your borders,  
He satisfies you with the finest wheat.

All: Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem, O praise your God, O Zion.

Cantor: He sends out his command to the earth  
And his word runs very swiftly.  
He gives snow like wool, he scatters hoarfrost like ashes.

All: Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem, O praise your God, O Zion.

Cantor: He scatters his hail like breadcrumbs, who can stand against his cold?  
He sends forth his word and melts them,  
He blows with his wind, and the waters flow.

All: Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem, O praise your God, O Zion.

Cantor: He declares his word to Jacob,  
His statutes and his judgments to Israel.  
He has not done so to any other nation,  
To them he has not revealed his judgments.

All: Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem, O praise your God, O Zion.



The Second Lesson is usually a reading from one of the New Testament Epistles (or letters), though occasionally from the Acts of the Apostles or the Book of Revelation. They teach us about the formation of the church and instruct us on how to live into our role as followers of Christ.

During the Holy Eucharist, there is always a reading from a Gospel. We stand to indicate the importance we place on Jesus' words and actions. The deacon or priest proclaims the Gospel in the midst of the people to represent the Good News that Jesus has come among us, and we all turn towards it.

The sermon is meant to help us make the Word of God a living and transforming reality of our lives today.

## THE EPISTLE

Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

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

*The people stand, as they are able.*

*Children are invited to join the Gospel procession in the aisle for the reading of the Gospel.*

## THE GOSPEL

John 1:1-14

Gospeler      The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John. **(+++)**  
People      **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

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.

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

*The people sit, and the children return to their seats.*

## THE SERMON

Max Smith, Deacon

*The people stand, as they are able.*



In the Nicene Creed, we respond to the proclamation of God's Word by affirming the historic faith of the Church. We "believe" (from the Latin credere, literally "to put one's heart into") because we offer our trust in the story of God's creating, redeeming, and remaining with the world. "We" believe because the church as a whole, the Body of Christ, carries and strengthens the faith of each individual.

The Prayers of the People are always responsive, because everyone gives voice to the supplications. We include prayers for others throughout the world, in our diocese, and those connected to our congregation. This is the part of the liturgy where it is most evident that we would be noticeably less without the contributions of each person present. We voice prayers from our parish prayer list, as well as requests from the onsite and online worshippers.

## THE NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.**

**With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead, (+) and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Deacon or other leader

Beloved of the Redeemer, let us offer our prayers to the God who comes among us, praying:



**Cantor: O Child of Ma - ry All: Hear our prayer.**

For God's people, the church: May we announce with joy the salvation of the world, we pray:

**Silence**

Cantor  
People

O Child of Mary,  
**hear our prayer.**

For all nations and peoples: May the shadow of war be banished by the bright song of the angelic choir, we pray:

**Silence**

Cantor  
People

O Child of Mary,  
**hear our prayer.**



For those who feel forsaken and desolate in this season: May they find comfort and peace in the God who delights in them, we pray:

**Silence**

Cantor            O Child of Mary,  
People            **hear our prayer.**

For the poor, hungry, oppressed and forgotten: May justice of the Prince of Peace shine like the dawn upon them, we pray:

**Silence**

Cantor            O Child of Mary,  
People            **hear our prayer.**

For this assembly: May we proclaim with joy the God who becomes one of us to make us one with God, we pray especially for these thanksgivings...

**Silence**

Cantor            O Child of Mary,  
People            **hear our prayer.**

For the sick and the dying: May the fullness of grace revealed in Christ bring them health in body and joy in spirit, we pray especially for...

**Silence**

Cantor            O Child of Mary,  
People            **hear our prayer.**

For our beloved dead: May the marriage of heaven and earth bring them life eternal, we pray especially for...

**Silence**

Cantor            O Child of Mary,  
People            **hear our prayer.**

Celebrant        Hear the prayers of your beloved people, Emmanuel, God-with-us, and fill us with the joy of those favored by God, that with thanksgiving we may acclaim you Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, and Prince of Peace, for you live and reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

*the people kneel, as they are able.*



In the confession we admit the ways we have not lived as we were created to live, both individually, and corporately, and ask for forgiveness. The priest declares to us the wonderful grace of God's promise of forgiveness, reconciliation, and the absolute remission of guilt.

The Peace has been exchanged at the Eucharist since the time of the first Christians. It is a profound act to offer the miraculous peace of God to one another before we join in communion with God and each other.

The Offertory is when we bring our gifts of bread, wine, money, and our very selves to present to the Lord as our initial act of Thanksgiving. This collection is a visible reminder that our whole lives are God's, and a part of what God has given us we give back in Thanksgiving for all that we have and all that we are.

## CONFESSON OF SIN

*The people stand or kneel, as they are able.*

Deacon Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

People **Gracious God, we would like to be among those who saw the coming of the Christ Child, those who dropped all that they were doing and traveled to worship the coming of God's love into this world. We would like to be those who cared for God in infant vulnerability; who tickled and cuddled and comforted the growing child, that he might know love and safety.**

**And yet, merciful God, we must recognize all the times we are more like Herod. Whenever we, in our actions or in our inactions, find our own need for control more compelling than the needs of others for health and safety. Whenever we cling to the security of our privilege, rather than standing up for the rights of the oppressed. Whenever we are complicit in the harming of innocents for the sake of profit, or power, or because we fear to know, and to change, the injustices of this world.**

**Loving God, we confess our sins against you and one another, and pray that you will fill us with your light, that we may live our lives as true disciples in your name, without counting the cost. In the name of Christ, the one who showed us the way, we pray. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Celebrant God's light is present in this world. Present in the Christ child, born to lead us out of darkness. Present in the star, in all that guides us to love.

People **God's light is in the world, and the darkness did not overcome it. God's grace is in the world, and our mis-steps will not overcome it.**

Celebrant Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our savior Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

People **We are loved, we are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen.**

*The people stand, as they are able.*

## THE PEACE

Celebrant The peace of Christ be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

*The congregation greets one another in the Peace of Christ. We encourage you to exchange the Peace with words and gestures, rather than touch, to protect the most vulnerable among us.*

*The people sit.*

## PRAYERS FOR BIRTHDAY, ANNIVERSARY, AND TRAVEL

## OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Kathryn Duncan, alto



## THE HOLY COMMUNION

*The people stand, as they are able.*

### OFFERTORY HYMN

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise Him, all creatures here below;  
praise Him above, ye heavenly host: praise Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost.

### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

(Eucharistic Prayer D, Page 372, Book of Common Prayer)

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Celebrant It is truly right to glorify you, Holy One, and to give you thanks; for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and for ever. Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance. Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we sing,



The Sanctus (*holy, holy, holy*) recalls the words of the prophet Isaiah, overwhelmed by the presence of God in the sanctuary, and these words were sung by the people as Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The Sanctus reminds us that this is an offering of the whole creation, which joins in singing these praises.

**SANCTUS**

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

Celebrant We acclaim you, holy God, glorious in power. Your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love. You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might rule and serve all your creatures. When our disobedience took us far from you, you did not abandon us to the power of death. In your mercy you came to our help, so that in seeking you we might find you. Again and again you called us into covenant with you, and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation.

Holy God, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, Jesus lived as one of us, yet without sin. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. To fulfill your purpose Jesus gave himself up to death; and, rising from the grave, destroyed death, and made the whole creation new.

And that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for Christ who died and rose for us, you sent the Holy Spirit, your own first gift for those who believe, to complete your work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it or lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.



Celebrant	<p>When the hour had come for Jesus to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end; at supper with them Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."</p> <p>After supper Jesus took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you. This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."</p> <p>Almighty God, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's death and descent among the dead, proclaiming Christ's resurrection and ascension to your right hand, awaiting Christ's coming in glory; and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you.</p>
All	<p><b>We praise you, we bless you, we give thanks to you, and we pray to you, Lord our God.</b></p> <p>God our Creator, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us, and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name.</p> <p>Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic Church, redeemed by the blood of your Christ. Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace.</p> <p>And grant that we may find our inheritance with the Blessed Virgin Mary, with matriarchs, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with St. Gregory and all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through Jesus Christ our Savior.</p> <p>Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. <b>AMEN.</b></p> <p>And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,</p> <p><b>Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.</b></p>
People	<p>The Great Amen is the only word in our Book of Common Prayer that is in all capital letters. It emphasizes that we all join together in asking Jesus to be present in the bread and wine, in boldly affirming our desire to receive God. It is appropriate to say this with enthusiasm!</p> <p>The Lord's Prayer is the prayer that Jesus gave to his followers when they asked him to teach them to pray. It links our daily bread to the spiritual food we receive in the Eucharist.</p>



The Fraction recalls Jesus breaking the bread at the Last Supper to share with the disciples, and reminds us that Jesus' body was broken on the cross for us to be shared with the world. Therefore we keep a moment of silence for prayers of awe and gratitude.

## BREAKING OF THE BREAD

*The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread.*

## FRACTION

*Antiphon*  
*Cantor; then All*

Who - ev - er eats this bread will live for ev - er.

*Cantor*

1. This is the true bread which comes down from hea - ven and gives life to the world. [Ant.] 2. Who - ev - er believes in me shall not hun - ger or thirst, for the bread which I give for the life of the world is my flesh. [Ant.]

## INVITATION

*All are welcome at the Lord's table. Baptized Christians, regardless of denomination or age, are invited to receive Holy Communion. Gluten-free bread is available; please ask the clergy. Receiving the bread only is full communion in the body of Christ, so if you choose to not receive the wine, you may cross your arms over your chest as you pass the Eucharistic Minister, or take a cup of consecrated juice.*

*To receive communion, hold out your hands and you will be given the bread. Then take a cup of wine or juice from the Eucharistic Minister, move to the next tray, consume the Bread and wine there, put the empty cup in the tray, and replace your mask before returning to your seat.*

*Anyone who has not been baptized, or for other reasons desires to receive a blessing instead of Communion is invited to come forward, and cross your arms over your chest to indicate your desire for a blessing. If you seek a deeper relationship with Christ through baptism, please speak with a priest after the service.*



The Prayer for Spiritual Communion articulates a hunger for unity with Jesus Christ when you cannot physically receive the Body and Blood of Christ. This prayer connects the one(s) praying with the reception of Holy Communion. Those worshipping online are invited to say this prayer as those onsite receive Communion.

### PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION (for those worshipping remotely)

*All at home*

In union, gracious God, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, we offer to you praise and thanksgiving. We remember your death, O Christ; we proclaim your resurrection; we await your coming in glory. Since we cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, we beseech you to come spiritually into our hearts. Cleanse and strengthen us with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let us never be separated from you. May we live in you, and you in us, in this life and in the life to come. **Amen.**

### COMMUNION CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

*O little town of Bethlehem*

1 O lit - tle town of Beth-le-hem, how still we see thee lie!  
 2 For Christ is born of Ma - ry; and gath-ered all a - bove,  
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won-drous gift is given!  
 \*4 Where child - ren pure and hap - py pray to the bless-ed Child,  
 5 O ho - ly Child of Beth-le-hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

1 A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
 2 while mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won-dering love.  
 3 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless-ings of his heaven.  
 4 where mis - er - y cries out to thee, Son of the mo - ther mild;  
 5 cast out our sin and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.

1 yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;  
 2 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!  
 3 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,  
 4 where char - i - ty stands watch-ing and faith holds wide the door,  
 5 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

1 the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
 2 and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.  
 3 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.  
 4 the dark night wakes, the glo - ry breaks, and Christ - mas comes once more.  
 5 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!



*The people stand, as they are able.*

### SENDING OF EUCHARISTIC VISITORS (when appropriate)

Celebrant We send you out to share Communion this week.

People **May you carry the prayers of all of us as you take this sacrament of Christ's presence.**

Celebrant May those who receive it from you be strengthened and encouraged in that community we have together in our Lord Jesus Christ.

People **Amen.**

### POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Celebrant Let us pray.

People **Eternal God, you have graciously accepted us as living members of our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.**

**Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Savior. Amen.**

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CHRISTMAS SEASON BLESSING

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

May God, who sent angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel. **Amen.**

May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you peace and favor. **Amen.**

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

After Communion, we give thanks for being part of the communion of God's life and for being fed so that we may go out to feed and serve others in our world.

One of the roles of the priest is to declare the eternal truth of God's ever-present blessing to God's people.



## CONGREGATIONAL HYMN (Verses 3 &amp; 4)

God rest you merry, gentlemen

1 God rest you mer - ry, gen - tle-men, let noth - ing you dis - may;  
2 From God our heaven - ly Fa - ther a bless - ed an - gel came  
3 "Fear not, then," said the an - gel, "Let noth - ing you af - fright;  
4 Now to the Lord sing prais - es, all you with - in this place,

re - mem - ber Christ our Sa - vior was born on Christ-mas Day,  
and un - to cer - tain shep - herds brought tid - ings of the same:  
this day is born a Sa - vior of a pure vir - gin bright,  
and with true love and char - i - ty each o - ther now em - brace;

to save us all from Sa - tan's power when we were gone a - stray.  
how that in Beth - le - hem was born the Son of God by name.  
to free all those who trust in him from Sa - tan's power and might."  
this ho - ly tide of Christ - mas doth bring re - deem - ing grace.

*Refrain*

O tid - ings of com - fort and joy, com-fort and

joy; O tid - ings of com - fort and joy!

Having heard the Gospel and having been fed at communion, the final act of our common worship is the Dismissal. It is not an afterthought, but an integral part of the service. Jesus' final action on earth was to send his followers into the world to make disciples, baptizing and teaching them to obey all he had commanded. And so we are sent out into the world to proclaim the Good News and be Christ's hands and feet on earth.

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

People

**Thanks be to God.**