



# ST. NICHOLAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**Christmas Eve**

**The Nativity of Our Lord**

**December 24, 2020**

**Prelude:** *Il est ne, le divin Enfant* | Words: Traditional French; English by Richard Cross | Music: A French carol; Arr. Richard Cross | Sung by Women of St. Nicholas Choir on Christmas Eve 2016

## REFRAIN

Il est ne, le divin Enfant! Jouez hautbois, resonancez, musettes;  
Il est ne, le divin Enfant; Chantons tous son avènement.

(English Translation: Now the holy Child is born! Play, merry oboes, and sound, ye bagpipes;  
Now the holy Child is born; Sing we all this happy morn.)

More than four thousand years ago Ancient prophets of God foretold him,  
More than four thousand years ago, Now at last his grace we know.

## REFRAIN

Oh, how lovely the holy Child, Oh, how perfect his bounteous favor;  
Oh, how lovely the holy Child, Gentle mother and wondrous Child!

## REFRAIN

Oh, good Jesus, Almighty King, Hidden God in the flesh of Mary,  
Oh, good Jesus, Almighty King, Take our hearts, the gifts we bring.

## REFRAIN

### ***Hymn – O come, all ye faithful***

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

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
Glory to God, glory in the highest;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be glory given;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

## Advent Wreath Candle Lighting

Celebrant: Tonight we light all the candles of the Advent wreath. Each candle has a meaning. The first candle is HOPE, the second candle is PEACE, the third candle is JOY, and the fourth candle is LOVE. The center candle is the Christ candle.

*The candles are lit.*

Scripture: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” “Isaiah 9:6

Prayer: “O God of hope, peace, joy, and love. As Mary and Joseph welcomed you into the world, now help us welcome you into our lives. Give us courage to hope; strength to seek peace. Fill our spirits with joy; and our hearts with love. Through Jesus Christ, the Lord of all. Amen.”

## The Word of God

Alleluia! Jesus is Born.

*People* **God is with us. Alleluia! Alleluia!!**

**The Collect for Purity** – Prayed together

**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** – Sung with Carolyn leading

**Angels we have heard on high  
Singing sweetly through the night  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their brave delight  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

**The Collect of the Day**

The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Celebrant* Let us pray together.

**O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.**

### THE LESSONS

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah [9:2-7]

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 Counselor, 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 onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

The Word of the Lord.

*People*    **Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 96** - Prayed responsively by **half** verse

- 1 Sing to the LORD a new song; \*  
**sing to the LORD, all the whole earth.**
- 2 Sing to the LORD and bless his Name; \*  
**proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.**
- 3 Declare his glory among the nations \*  
**and his wonders among all peoples.**
- 4 For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; \*  
**he is more to be feared than all gods.**
- 5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; \*  
**but it is the LORD who made the heavens.**
- 6 Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence! \*  
**Oh, the power and the splendor of his sanctuary!**
- 7 Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples; \*  
**ascribe to the LORD honor and power.**
- 8 Ascribe to the LORD the honor due his Name; \*  
**bring offerings and come into his courts.**
- 9 Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; \*  
**let the whole earth tremble before him.**
- 10 Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is King! \*  
**he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;  
he will judge the peoples with equity."**
- 11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;  
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; \*  
**let the field be joyful and all that is therein.**
- 12 Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy  
before the LORD when he comes, \*  
**when he comes to judge the earth.**
- 13 He will judge the world with righteousness \*  
**and the peoples with his truth.**

A Reading from Letter of Paul to Titus [2:11-14]

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

The Word of the Lord.

*People*    **Thanks be to God.**

## The Gospel

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke [2:1-20]

*People* **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see-- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

[When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

The Gospel of the Lord.

*People* **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

## The Sermon

### 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: was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. 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, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who 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.**

## **THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE – FORM IV**

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy  
***Hear our prayer....***

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy  
***Hear our prayer....***

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy  
***Hear our prayer....***

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy  
***Hear our prayer....***

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

***Hear our prayer....***

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

***Hear our prayer....***

*The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.*

O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. ***Amen.***

### **THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

***Anthem:*** *All On a Starry Night* | Words: J. Paul Williams | Music: Joseph Graham | Sung by St. Nicholas Choir on Christmas Eve 2017

Long ago on a starry night, Love came down to touch the earth,  
blessing all with holy light at the Savior's birth.  
Underneath a cloudless sky, angels sing a lullaby,  
words of peace to humankind all on a starry night.

Glory be to God in the highest. Peace and joy to all.  
Come and worship, come and worship, wondrous is the call.  
Shepherds heard the music sounding from above,  
falling like a gentle snow, filling all the earth with songs of love.

### **REPEAT VERSE ONE**

Silent night, holy night, all on a starry night.

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING – EUCHARISTIC/AGAPE FEAST

*Please have the consecrated bread or a piece of bread available for the Eucharist/Agape Feast*

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and every-where to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you gave Jesus Christ, your only Son, to be born for us; who, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, was made perfect Man of the flesh of the Virgin Mary his mother; so that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin, and receive power to become your children. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name.

*Celebrant and People*

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

*The Celebrant continues*

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

*Celebrant and People*

**We remember his death,  
We proclaim his resurrection,  
We await his coming in glory;**

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with Nicholas and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

#### **THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD**

**We break this bread together as one community. May the food and companionship we share nourish our bodies, hearts and minds, and may our spirits be refreshed with the love and enduring presence of Emmanuel, God with us, now and always. Amen.**

*A moment of silent prayer is observed as the community partakes in the bread.*

*Celebrant:* Let us pray together.

*All:* **Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood and the Agape Feast. 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 Lord. Amen.**

**Hymn - Silent Night** – feel free to turn off lights and/or light candles

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

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight, glories stream from heaven a far,  
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia; Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior is born!

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

**THE BLESSING**

May Christ, who by his birth gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

**THE DISMISSAL**

*Celebrant* Alleluia! Alleluia! Let us go forth into the world, bearing the light of Christ.  
*People* **Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

