



**ST. JAMES
PARISH CHURCH**

**A Bethlehem A-B-C
Christmas Eve Service**

**At
St. James Parish Church
On
December 24, 2024
At
6:00 p.m.**

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**FROM THE RECTOR:
A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2024**

As the joyous season of Christmas approaches, I extend my heartfelt greetings to each and every one of you. This time of year is a beautiful reminder of God's everlasting love and the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, who brings light and hope into our lives.

As we gather to celebrate the birth of our Savior, let us reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. It is a time for love, compassion, and generosity. May we open our hearts to those in need, share our blessings with others, and spread the message of peace and goodwill.

I want to take this moment to express my deepest gratitude for your unwavering support, prayers, presence, commitment, and contributions throughout the year. Your

dedication and love have been a cornerstone of our community, and I am truly thankful for each one of you.

We also take a moment to remember and honor those who have served our church faithfully and have embodied the Christmas message but are no longer with us. Their legacy of love, service, and faith continues to inspire us and strengthen our community. Let us keep their memories close to our hearts during this sacred season.

May the spirit of Christmas fill your homes with warmth, your hearts with joy, and your lives with countless blessings. As the new year dawns, let us further commit to being a community, united in faith and love, to worship and give thanks for the greatest gift of all.

Wishing you and your loved ones a merry Christmas and a New Year filled with God's grace and abundant blessings.

With love and peace,
Rev. Bev
Your friend and rector

St. James Parish Church
God's Holy Acre

A BETHLEHEM A-B-C

CALL TO WORSHIP

WELCOME

Leader: The Light shines in the darkness.

Congregation: And the darkness has not overcome it.

Leader: The word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Congregation: And we saw the Glory of Christ.

Leader: To us a child is born.

Congregation: To us a Son is given.

Leader: That is why we join our voices with the angels saying:

Congregation: Glory to God in the highest heavens!

The Advent Wreath

Lighting the Candles: Now is the time to light the Advent Candles. This past Sunday was the final Sunday of Advent, and we lit four candles:

- ◆ The candle of **Hope (purple)**
- ◆ The candle of **Love (purple)**
- ◆ The candle of **Joy (pink)**
- ◆ The candle of **Peace (purple)**.
- ◆ Later tonight Christmas Eve, we will light
- ◆ The **white candle**, the **Christ Candle**, which symbolizes the **Light** – along with **Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace** – that Christ brought into the world.



Please pray with me as we open our time together.

OPENING PRAYER (All):

Almighty God, we thank you for the birth of the Christ child in Bethlehem, as announced by the angels on this holy night.

May the mystery of the Word made flesh fill our souls with wonder and yearning. Change our hearts from a busy inn to a quiet chamber for your glory.

May we who are gathered here join in song with the angels, share the delight of the shepherds, and adore him with the wise men.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen.**

HYMN 48

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel;
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

2. O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.

Refrain

3. O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Refrain

4. O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.

Refrain

5. O come, O come, thou Lord of Might,
 who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
 in ancient times didst give the law
 in cloud and majesty, and awe.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 9: 2, 6-7

*A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah,
 Chapter 9, beginning at the second verse.*

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.

This is the word of the Lord;
Congregation: Thanks be to God

HYMN 89: UNTO TO US A BOY IS BORN.

1. Unto us a boy is born!
The King of all creation,
came he to a world forlorn,
the Lord of every nation.
2. Cradled in a stall was he
with sleepy cows and asses;
but the very beasts could see
that he all men surpasses.
3. Herod then with fear was filled;
'A prince,' he said, 'in Jewry!'
All the little boys he killed
at Bethlehem in his fury.
4. Now may Mary's son who came
so long ago to love us,
lead us all with hearts a-flame
unto the joys above us.
5. Unto us a boy is born!
The King of all creation,
came he to a world forlorn,
The Lord of every nation.

THE SECOND READING: JOHN 1: 1-5

*A Reading from the Gospel of John, Chapter 1,
beginning at the first verse.*

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.

This is the word of the Lord;

Congregation: Thanks be to God

THE THIRD READING: LUKE 1:26-38:

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 1, beginning at the twenty-sixth verse.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give

to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’

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.’ Then the angel departed from her.

This is the word of the Lord;

Congregation: Thanks be to God

THE FOURTH READING: MATTHEW 1.19-25

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 1, beginning at the nineteenth verse.

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 fulfil 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.

This is the word of the Lord;

Congregation: Thanks be to God

**HYMN 83:
OF THE FATHER'S LOVE BEGOTTEN**

1. Of the Father's love begotten,
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore.
2. At his word the worlds were framèd;
He commanded, it was done:
Heav'n and earth and depths of ocean,

In their threefold order one;
 All that grows beneath the shining
 Of the moon and burning sun—
 [Evermore and evermore.]

3. He was found in human fashion,
 Death and sorrow here to know,
 That the race of Adam's children,
 Doomed by law to endless woe,
 May not henceforth die and perish
 In the dreadful gulf below—
 [Evermore and evermore.]

4. O that birth forever blessèd,
 When the virgin, full of grace,
 By the Holy Ghost conceiving,
 Bore the Saviour of our race,
 And the babe, the world's Redeemer,
 First revealed his sacred face—
 [Evermore and evermore.]

5. This is he whom seers in old time
 Chanted of with one accord,
 Whom the voices of the prophets
 Promised in their faithful word;
 Now he shines, the long-expected;
 Let creation praise its Lord—
 [Evermore and evermore.]

6. O ye heights of Heav'n adore him!
 Angel hosts his praises sing!
 All dominions bow before him

And exalt our God and King.
 Let no tongue on Earth be silent,
 Every voice in concert ring—
 [Evermore and evermore.]

7. Christ! to thee with God the Father,
 And O Holy Ghost, to thee,
 Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving
 And unwearied praises be,
 Honour, glory, and dominion,
 And eternal victory—
 [Evermore and evermore.]

THE FIFTH READING: LUKE 2: 1 - 8

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 2, beginning at the first verse.

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.

This is the word of the Lord;

Congregation: Thanks be to God

HYMN 82: O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

O little town of Bethlehem,
 how still we see thee lie!
 Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
 the silent stars go by:
 yet in thy dark streets shineth
 the everlasting Light;
 the hopes and fears of all the years
 are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary;
 and, gathered all above,
 while mortals sleep, the angels keep
 their watch of wondering love.
 O morning stars, together
 proclaim the holy birth,
 and praises sing to God the King,
 and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
 the wondrous gift is given!
 So God imparts to human hearts
 the blessings of his heaven.
 No ear may hear his coming;
 but in this world of sin,

where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

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

THE SIXTH READING: LUKE 2: 9 - 20

THE CELEBRATION

*A Reading from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 2,
beginning at the ninth verse.*

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 Saviour, 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 favours!’

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.

This is the word of the Lord;

Congregation: Thanks be to God

HYMN 60:

ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

1. Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story
now proclaim Messiah's birth:

Refrain:

*Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.*

2. Shepherds, in the field abiding,
 watching o'er your flocks by night,
 God with us is now residing;
 yonder shines the infant light:

Refrain

3. Sages, leave your contemplations,
 brighter visions beam afar;
 seek the great Desire of nations;
 ye have seen his natal star:

Refrain

4. Saints, before the altar bending,
 watching long in hope and fear;
 suddenly the Lord, descending,
 in his temple shall appear:

Refrain

**THE SEVENTH READING: MATTHEW 2: 1 - 9
 THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN**

***A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 2,
 beginning at the first verse.***

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When

King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of
Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.” ’

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.'

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him

gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

This is the word of the Lord;

Congregation: Thanks be to God

OFFERTORY AND PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

HYMN 65

Refrain:

*Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go tell it on the mountain,
that Jesus Christ is born!*

While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light.

Refrain

The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Saviour's birth.

Refrain

Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.

Refrain

HYMN 63

The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
 the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
 the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
 and they said that his name was Jesus.

Refrain:

*He come from the glory,
 he come from the glorious kingdom.
 He come from the glory,
 he come from the glorious kingdom.
 Oh yes, believer, oh yes, believer.
 He come from the glory,
 he come from the glorious kingdom.*

The angels sang when the babe was born,
 the angels sang when the babe was born,
 the angels sang when the babe was born,
 and proclaimed him the Saviour Jesus.

Refrain

The wise men saw where the babe was born,
 the wise men saw where the babe was born,
 the wise men saw where the babe was born,
 and they saw that his name was Jesus.

Refrain

PRAYERS: LET US PRAY

LEADER: Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. As we celebrate His birth, fill our hearts with gratitude for His presence in our lives.”

Congregation: **Lord, in your love and mercy,
Hear our prayers.**

LEADER: “Dear God, strengthen our faith as we celebrate the birth of Christ. Help us to trust in your promises and walk in your ways.”

Congregation: **Lord, in your love and mercy,
Hear our prayers.**

LEADER: “Lord, as we reflect on the birth of Jesus, renew our hope. May we be reminded of the hope that Christ brings to the world.”

Congregation: **Lord, in your love and mercy,
Hear our prayers.**

LEADER: “Heavenly Father, fill our hearts with joy as we celebrate the birth of your Son. May this joy overflow into all aspects of our lives.”

Congregation: **Lord, in your love and mercy,
Hear our prayers.**

LEADER: “Lord, we pray for peace on this holy night. May your peace fill our hearts and our world as we remember the birth of the Prince of Peace.”

Congregation: **Lord, in your love and mercy,**

Hear our prayers.

LEADER: “Dear God, we remember those who are less fortunate this Christmas Eve. May they feel your love and provision in their lives.”

Congregation: **Lord, in your love and mercy,
Hear our prayers.**

LEADER: “Lord, bless our church as we come together to celebrate the birth of Christ. May we be a beacon of your love and light to the community.”

Congregation: **Lord, in your love and mercy,
Hear our prayers.**

LEADER: “Dear God, bless the children of our church and community as we celebrate Christmas. May they know the love and joy of Jesus’ birth.”

Congregation: **Lord, in your love and mercy,
Hear our prayers.**

LEADER: “Heavenly Father, bless our families as we gather to celebrate Christmas. May our homes be filled with love, joy, and the spirit of Christ.”

Congregation: **Lord, in your love and mercy,
Hear our prayers.**

LEADER: “Lord, as we celebrate the birth of your Son, we ask for your forgiveness for our sins. Help us to forgive others as you have forgiven us.”

Congregation: **Lord, in your love and mercy,
Hear our prayers.**

LEADER: “Lord, we pray for the world this Christmas Eve. May the message of Christ’s birth bring peace and goodwill to all nations.”

Congregation: **Lord, in your love and mercy,
Hear our prayers.**

LEADER: “Dear God, we are grateful for all the blessings you have given us. As we celebrate Christmas, help us to remember and appreciate your gifts.”

Congregation: **Lord, in your love and mercy,
Hear our prayers.**

**NOW LET US PRAY THE LORD’S PRAYER
TOGETHER:**

THE LORD’S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name;
your kingdom come;
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and forever.
Amen.**

HYMN 88

THE FIRST NOWELL

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

Refrain

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

2. They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east, beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. ***Refrain***
3. And by the light of that same star
three Wise Men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. ***Refrain***
4. This star drew nigh to the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay. ***Refrain***
5. Then entered in those Wise Men three,
full reverently upon the knee,
and offered there, in his presence,
gold and myrrh, and frankincense. ***Refrain***

6. Then let us all with one accord
sing praise to our heavenly Lord;
That hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood our life hath bought. *Refrain*

**BENEDICTION AND BLESSING
DISMISSAL.**

HYMN: SILENT NIGHT

1. Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.
2. Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, "Alleluia!
Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born!"
3. Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from Thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!

4. Silent night! Holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing
"Alleluia" to our King:
"Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born."

**The Rector, The Church's PCC, the
Sunday School Family and the entire
congregation of St. James Parish
Church take this opportunity to wish
everyone a Merry Christmas and a
happy, healthy and productive 2025.**

Merry Christmas

and a

Happy New Year!

