

Bethesda Episcopal Church

Advent Sunday

3 December 2023

Organ Divinum Mysterium

Wilbur Held (1914-2015)

All stand as the choir and minsters enter.

The Advent Prose



The Cantor intones the antiphon. The congregation and choir repeat the antiphon after each verse.

Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever:
thy holy cities are a wilderness, Sion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation:
our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee. **Antiphon.**

We have sinned, and are as an unclean thing, and we all do fade as a leaf:
and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away: thou hast hid thy face from us:
and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. **Antiphon.**

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen;
that ye may know me and believe me: I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is
no Saviour: and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. **Antiphon.**

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; my salvation shall not tarry:
why wilt thou waste away in sadness? why hath sorrow seized thee?
Fear not, for I will save thee: For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel,
thy Redeemer. **Antiphon.**

At the wreath, the Verger lights the candle for Advent Sunday. Remain standing.

People Light and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Thanks be to God.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew. (24.42-44)

Jesus said, "Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

People The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray. Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

All sit.

The First Reading

Isaiah 64:1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence-- as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil-- to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

*The Lector concludes
The People respond*

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

Remain seated.

The Gradual: *Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18*

Henry Walford Davies (1869-1941)

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; * shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, * stir up your strength and come to help us.

Restore us, O God of hosts; * show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

O Lord God of hosts, * how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?

You have fed them with the bread of tears; * you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

You have made us the derision of our neighbors, * and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

Restore us, O God of hosts; * show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, * the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.

And so will we never turn away from you; * give us life, that we may call upon your Name.

Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; * show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

The Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind-- just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you-- so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

*The Lector concludes
The People respond*

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God

All stand.

The Alleluia



Cantor: Show us thy mercy, O Lord; and grant us thy salvation. (*Ps 85:7*)

All repeat: **Alleluia.**

Remain standing.

The Holy Gospel

Mark 13:24-37

*Celebrant
People*

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Mark.
Glory be to thee, O Lord.

Jesus said, "In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

*Celebrant
People*

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to thee, O Christ.

The Sermon

The Reverend Dr David Olsen

All stand.

The Nicene Creed *Said by all*

**I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible;
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God;
begotten, not made;
being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation
came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried;
and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of the Father;
and he shall come again, with glory,
to judge both the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life,
who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
who spake by the Prophets.
And I believe one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church;**

**I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins;
and I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

All kneel.

The Prayers of The People

In our prayers for the Anglican Communion, we remember the Church of North India; and in our Diocese, we pray for our life together as we begin a new Christian Year.

We give thanks for the marriage of Isabelle Sipperly and Zachary Mayo, celebrated here yesterday; may the Lord bless them and uphold them in their life together. We remember all those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this week; and those whose year's mind falls at this time.

Let us give glory to God on high, who from his fullness has received grace upon grace, saying, *'Lord, graciously hear us.'*

For the holy Church of God throughout the world, that with one heart we may rejoice in the Word made flesh. Lord, hear us: **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For good will in the hearts of all; and on earth, peace. Lord, hear us: **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the poor, the outcast and the homeless; for the helpless, the lonely and the unloved. Lord, hear us: **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For those who have asked for our prayers, especially, Penny, David, Jude, Paul, Jerilyn and Robert. Lord, hear us: **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For all who have gone before us, whose hope was in the Word made flesh. Lord, hear us: **Lord, graciously hear us.**

With the blessed Virgin Mary, and all the host of heaven, let our voices rise to praise God's glory. Lord, hear us: **Lord, graciously hear us.**

The Celebrant says a concluding prayer.

Keep us, O Lord, while we tarry on this earth, in a serious seeking after thee, and in an affectionate walking with thee, all the days of our life: that when thou comest, we may be found, not hiding our talent, nor yet asleep with our lamp unfurnished, but waiting and longing for our Lord, our glorious King, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God.

The people say together

**Almighty God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
maker of all things, judge of all men:
We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness,
which we from time to time most grievously have committed,**

by thought, word, and deed, against thy divine Majesty,
provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us.
We do earnestly repent,
and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings;
the remembrance of them is grievous unto us,
the burden of them is intolerable.
Have mercy upon us,
have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;
for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may ever hereafter
serve and please thee in newness of life,
to the honor and glory of thy Name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Celebrant says

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All stand. At the exchange of the Peace, please remain in your pew.

The Peace

<i>Celebrant</i>	The peace of the Lord be always with you.
<i>People</i>	And with thy spirit.

Hymn at The Offertory #57

From the Hymnal 1982

Remain standing

The Eucharistic Prayer

<i>Celebrant</i>	The Lord be with you.
<i>People</i>	And with thy spirit.
<i>Celebrant</i>	Lift up your hearts.
<i>People</i>	We lift them up unto the Lord.
<i>Celebrant</i>	Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.
<i>People</i>	It is meet and right so to do.

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God. Because thou didst give Jesus Christ, thine only Son, to be born for us; who, by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, was made very Man of the substance of the Virgin Mary his mother; that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin, and receive power to become thy children. Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying,



Hea-ven and earth are full of thy glo - ry. Glo - ry be to
 thee, O Lord Most High. Bless - ed is he that com - eth in the
 name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

All kneel.

All glory be to thee, Almighty God, our heavenly Father, for that thou of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.

For in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Likewise, after supper, he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of this; for this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me."

Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the institution of thy dearly beloved Son our Savior Jesus Christ, we, thy humble servants, do celebrate and make here before thy divine Majesty, with these thy holy gifts, which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; rendering unto thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same.

And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us; and of thy almighty goodness, vouchsafe to bless and sanctify, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine; that we, receiving them according to thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood.

And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching thee to grant that, by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we, and all thy whole Church, may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion.

And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee that we, and all others who shall be partakers of this Holy Communion, may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction, and made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him.

And although we are unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service, not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offenses, through Jesus Christ our Lord; By whom, and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. **Amen**

Our Father

And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say,

**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 Fraction

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

The Prayer of Humble Access

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

The Agnus Dei from the Communion Service

John Merbecke (1510-1585)

*O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.*

Communion is distributed at the chancel step.

At The Communion

Choir: *Dearest Lord Jesu*

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

*Dearest Lord Jesu, oh why dost Thou tarry?
Come now for I am of waiting so weary,
Come now and comfort my heart in despair;
Take me from misery, sorrow and care.*

*Come now, Lord Jesu, Oh why dost Thou tarry?
Come now for I am of waiting so weary, so weary.*

*Deck thee, oh deck thee, meet garment prepare thee.
Keep thy lamp burning, and oil ever near thee,
Ready, oh faithful one, fit for the Feast
At midnight call for thee, oh wedding guest.*

After Communion, all kneel. All say together

The Prayer after Communion

Let us pray. **Almighty and ever living God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom. And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.**

The Blessing and Dismissal

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

*Celebrant
People*

*Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.*

The Closing Hymn #66

From the Hymnal 1982

Organ *Wachet auf (Sleepers awake)*

arr. Johann Gottfried Walther (1684-1748)

Today at Bethesda

The **Advent wreath** is given in memory of Bruce Solenski by Kathleen and Mark Anspach. For many years, Bruce brought beauty and grace to the altar of Bethesda through his elegant and creative floral arrangements. He continues to be fondly remembered, especially during the Advent-Christmas and Easter seasons, when he dedicated his talents to the glory of God.

Thank you to the Reverend Dr David Olsen for preaching at services this morning. David has served as Executive Director of the Samaritan Counseling Center since its inception in 1985. He and his wife, Cheryl, are members of Bethesda Church.

Readers Thank you to those reading and leading prayers at services this morning:

8am Mary Withington **10am** Libby Smith-Holmes and Daniel Beach

Refreshments Join us for coffee following the 10am liturgy. Thank you to Joyce Cole for hosting today.

Special Monthly Envelope The Casavant organ, located in the chancel of the church, has served Bethesda Church well since it replaced the historic E.M. Skinner pipe organ in 1968. Nevertheless, the last 55 years of service have shown considerable wear on the instrument, including deterioration of pipework and wind leaks; water damage, dust and debris; and a number of mechanical problems which affect the console and its functionality. The parish recently contracted with Foley-Baker, Inc. of Tolland, Connecticut, to provide an assessment of the organ. After visiting Bethesda last week, technicians from the firm provided initial feedback and advice concerning its ongoing care and maintenance which we will share with the parish in the coming weeks. Given the important role music plays in Bethesda's liturgical life, the Vestry has agreed that donations to December's special monthly envelope will be directed to organ maintenance.

Bethesda Notices

Thursdays in Advent In Advent season, there will be a celebration of Holy Communion on Thursdays at 12.10 pm, beginning 7th December.

Christmas Decorating Join us on this Saturday, 9 December at 9am to decorate the church for the festive season.

Lessons and Carols at Bethesda Bethesda will hold a service of Lessons & Carols at 10am on Sunday 17 December. The Choir will sing traditional French, English and German Carols, as well as works by Vaughan Williams, Warlock, Charpentier and Dave Brubeck. There will even be a piece about dragons ... *scriptural* dragons, of course! This is a perfect opportunity to extend an invitation to a friend or neighbor to attend Bethesda with you.

Advent Recital A program of arias, art songs, and piano works performed by Carla Fisk, soprano, Derek Stannard, tenor, and Karen Becker, pianist, is planned for Sunday 17 December at 3pm at Bethesda.

Office Hours: Tuesday & Wednesday 10 to noon; and Thursday noon to 3pm.

Parking. The lot adjacent to the church offers free parking for the first two hours. You will require a credit card to enter and exit the lot which is accessible via Congress Street.

Community and Diocesan Notices

Concert The Choir of Cathedral of All Saints Albany and period instrument orchestra will present a performance of Handel's masterpiece, *Messiah* at 7 p.m. this Tuesday, 5 December. For tickets consult www.cathedralofallsaints.org/special-events

Lessons and Carols at Christ Church, Ballston Spa. This service, which features carols of Advent and Christmas from Celtic, African American, and Shape Note traditions, will take place on Sunday, December 10 at 4:00 p.m. and Monday, December 11 at 7:30 p.m., at Christ Episcopal Church. The event is free and open to the public.

Bethesda parishioners are cordially invited to the annual performance of **The Boar's Head & Yule Log Pageant** at 7 p.m. on Friday, 15th December at the Hoosac School. Founded in 1889 by the Reverend Dr Edward Dudley Tibbits, Hoosac is a consciously Episcopal School, located at 14 Pine Valley Road, off routes NY-7 and US-22 in Hoosick, N Y. The school has performed the Boar's Head and Yule Log each year since 1892; it is the first and oldest performance of the Boar's Head in North America. Every student participates in costume. For further information and/or to RSVP (required) please call 518-686-7331.

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols with music for brass, organ and choir is a traditional part of the run-up to Christmas at All Saints' Cathedral, Albany. This year's service takes place at 7pm on Tuesday, 19 December.

LifeWorks Community Action is a non-profit established in 1965 that works to alleviate poverty by assisting local families and individuals with a wide range of services. Bethesda is currently collecting canned goods for LifeWorks. Donated items may be left in the box by the side door entrance.

Fr Charles Wallace, Priest-in-Charge

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ADVENT & CHRISTMAS at Bethesda

SUNDAY, 10 December: Advent II

8am Holy Communion
10am Sung Eucharist

Thursday, 14 December 12.10pm Holy Communion

SUNDAY, 17 December: Advent III

8am Holy Communion
10am Lessons and Carols
3pm Recital

Thursday, 21 December 12.10pm Holy Communion

SUNDAY, 24 December: Advent IV

*9am Holy Communion (said)

CHRISTMAS EVE

4pm Sung Eucharist
10pm Procession and Sung Eucharist

CHRISTMAS DAY

9am Holy Communion (said)

SUNDAY, 31 December: Sunday after Christmas

*9am Holy Communion (said)