

Bethesda Episcopal Church

The Third Sunday of Advent: Gaudete

17 December 2023

8.00 am - Holy Communion

Please follow the service order on the laminated card.

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And with thy spirit.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

Stir up thy power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let thy bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honor and glory, world without end. **Amen.**

All sit.

The Epistle

Philippians 4.4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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

All stand.

The Holy Gospel

John 1.6-8, 19-28

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St John.
All: **Glory be to thee, O Lord.**

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.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

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

After the Nicene Creed, all kneel.

The Prayers of The People

In our prayers for the Anglican Communion, we remember this week the Church of Papua New Guinea; and in the Albany Diocese, for lay leaders, parish wardens and Vestry members.

We ask God's blessing on 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, Al, 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.

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, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*The Service continues with the **Confession**, printed on the laminated card.*

Parish Notices

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.

Advent Recital This afternoon at 3pm, Carla Fisk, soprano, Derek Stannard, tenor, and Karen Becker, pianist, present a program of arias, art songs, and piano works. Please join us!

Sunday Morning Bible Study Classes resume on 7 January 2024.

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.

Holy Communion In Advent season, there will be a midweek celebration of Communion on Thursdays at 12.10. Our final Thursday service for Advent is on 21 December.

The Parish Office will be closed from 23 December to 8 January inclusive.

Financial Overview*

As we approach year end, we are currently running a **deficit** of approximately **\$9,000** through the end of November.

Our spending is less than budget by approximately \$24,875 primarily due to lower Maintenance costs than planned, lower fees, and the timing on some items that will hit in December.

We are dependent on generous December giving to close our deficit and provide cash for the first part of 2024. Thank you for your attention and support.

**This Operational view excludes items funded through designated funds and giving, such as Choir.*



Sunday, 24 December: Fourth Sunday in Advent
9am Holy Communion (said)

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES
4pm Blessing of the Crib & Sung Eucharist
10pm Blessing of the Crib, Procession and Sung Eucharist

CHRISTMAS DAY
9am Holy Communion (said)

Sunday, 31 December: Sunday after Christmas
9am Holy Communion (said)

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