

# **Bethesda Episcopal Church**

**Christmas Eve 2023**

## **10pm Blessing of the Crib, Procession & Sung Eucharist**

*Please switch off your cell phone before the service begins.*

### **Music before the Service**

Pastorale ad libitum, from *Christmas Concerto*

*Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)*

*Stephani and Michael Emery, violinists*

Rosary Sonata II, The Visitation

*Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (1644-1704)*

- I. Sonata
- II. Allamanda
- III. Finale

*Michael Emery, violinist*

Choir: What Sweeter Music

*John Rutter (b. 1945)*

*What sweeter music can we bring  
Than a carol for to sing  
The birth of this our Heavenly King?  
Awake the voice, awake the string.*

*Dark and dull night, fly hence away  
And give the honor to this day  
That sees December turned to May.*

*Why does the chilling winter's mourn  
Smile, like a field beset with corn,  
Or smell like a meadow newly-shorn  
Thus, on the sudden? Come and see  
The 'cause, why things thus fragrant be.*

*'Tis He is born, whose quickening birth  
Gives life and luster, public mirth  
To Heaven, and the under-Earth.*

*We see him come, and know him ours  
Who with his sunshine and his showers  
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.*

*The darling of the world is come  
And fit it is, we find a room  
To welcome him, to welcome him.*

*The nobler part of all the house here is the heart  
Which we will give him, and bequeath  
This holy and this ivy wreath  
To do him honor, who's our King  
And Lord of all this revelling.*

*What sweeter music can we bring  
Than a carol for to sing  
The birth of this our Heavenly King.*

*Text: from "A Christmas Carol" by Robert Herrick (1591-1674)*

**Organ:** Irby (Once in Royal David's City)      *Robert Buckley Farlee (b. 1950)*

*All stand as the Celebrant enters.*

### ***The Blessing of the Crib***

In the faith of Christ and in thy Name, O God most holy,  
Do we bless and hallow this Crib of Christmas;  
To set before the eyes of thy children  
The great love and humility of Jesus Christ thine only Son;  
Who for us and for our salvation came down as at this time from heaven,  
And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary his Mother,  
And was made man;  
To whom with thee and the same Spirit  
Be all honor, majesty, glory and worship,  
Now, and world without end.  
**Amen.**

May the grace of Christ our Savior be with us all. **Amen.**

### ***At the Procession:***

*Choir Only:* Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby  
In a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.

*All:*      **He came down to earth from heaven,  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And His shelter was a stable,  
And His cradle was a stall;  
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,  
Lived on earth our Savior holy.**

**Not in that poor lowly stable,  
With the oxen standing by,  
We shall see Him; but in heaven,  
Set at God's right hand on high;  
When like stars His children crowned  
All in white shall wait around.**

*Remain standing.*

*Celebrant:*      The Word was made flesh. Alleluia.  
*People:*        **And dwelt among us. Alleluia.**

Let us pray. O God, who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thy only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our Judge; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

*The Procession continues with the Carol:*

**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.  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**God of God, Light of Light  
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Very God, begotten, not created.  
O come, let us adore Him. 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 in the highest.  
O come, let us adore him. O come, let us adore Him  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

*At the high altar, the Celebrant prays the Collect for Christmas.*

The Lord be with you.  
**All: And with thy spirit.**

Let us pray. O God, who hast caused this holy night to shine with the illumination of the true Light: Grant us, we beseech thee, that as we have known the mystery of that Light upon earth, so may we also perfectly enjoy him in heaven; where with thee and the Holy Spirit he liveth and reigneth, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*All sit.*

### ***The Reading***

*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 Lector concludes  
The People respond*

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

*All stand.*

**Carol**

**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.**

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

**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 today.  
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell;  
O, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.**

***The Holy Gospel***

*John 1:1-14*

*Celebrant  
People*

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

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.

*Celebrant  
People*

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

***The Sermon***

*Fr Charles Wallace*

*Following the sermon, remain seated.*

**Chorale**      *from the Christmas Oratorio*

*J. S. Bach (1685-1750)*

*Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light,  
And usher in the morning;  
Ye shepherds, shrink not with affright,  
But hear the angel's warning.  
This Child, now weak in infancy,  
Our confidence and joy shall be.  
The power of Satan breaking,  
Our peace eternal making.*

*Text: trans. John Troutbeck, 1885*

*All stand.*

***The Nicene Creed***

**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***

Let us give glory to God on high, who from his fullness has received grace upon grace.

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 sick, the lonely and the unloved. 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.*

Grant us, O God, such love and wonder, that with humble shepherds, wise men and pilgrims unknown, we too may come and adore the Christ-child, our heavenly King, with our gifts of worship and service; through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*Remain kneeling. The Celebrant invites the people to make their confession, saying,*

Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead the new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways: Draw near with faith, and make your humble confession to Almighty God, devoutly kneeling.

*All say:*

**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.**

*Remain kneeling as the Celebrant says the Absolution.*

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. Please remain in your place during the exchange of the Peace.*

### **The Peace**

*Celebrant*        The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
*People*            **And with thy spirit.**

*During the Carol, a collection is taken to support the ministry of Bethesda Church. Thank you for your kindness and generosity.*

### **Carol At The Offertory:**

**God rest ye merry gentlemen  
Let nothing you dismay.  
For Jesus Christ our Savior  
Was born upon this day,  
To save us all from Satan's pow'r  
When we were gone astray:  
    *O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,  
    O tidings of comfort and joy.***

**From God our heav'nly Father  
A blessed Angel came;  
And unto certain shepherds  
Brought tidings of the same,  
How that in Bethlehem was born  
The Son of God by name.  
    *O tidings of comfort and joy...***

**The shepherds at those tidings  
Rejoiced much in mind,  
And left their flocks a-feeding  
In tempest, storm and wind,  
And went to Bethlehem straightway  
The blessed babe to find.  
    *O tidings of comfort and joy...***

**Now to the Lord sing praises,  
All you within this place,  
And with true love and brotherhood,  
Each other now embrace;  
This holy tide of Christmas  
All others doth deface.  
    *O tidings of comfort and joy...***

*All remain standing.*

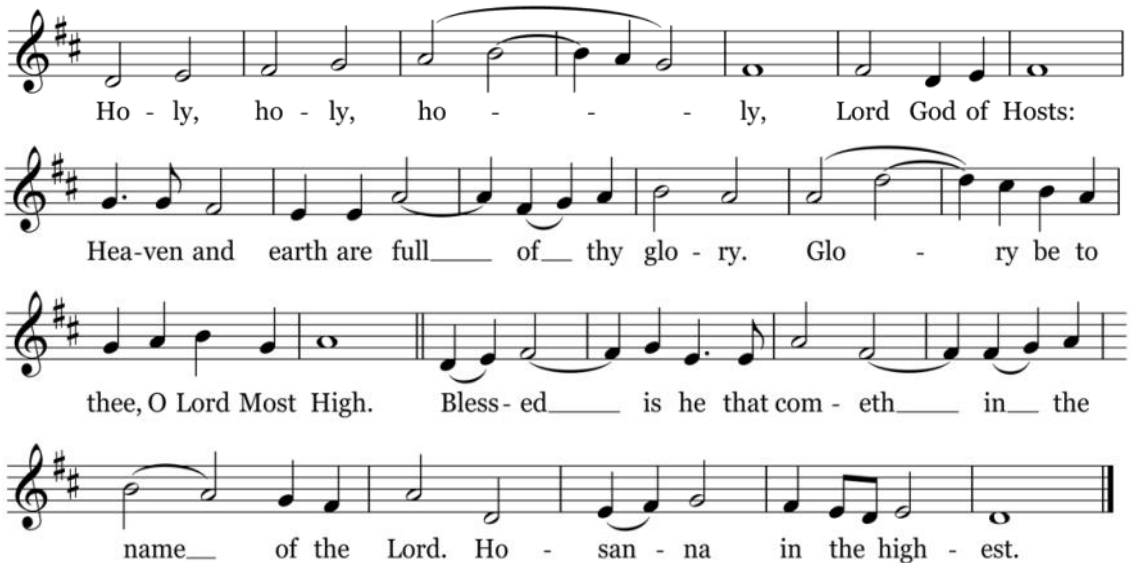
## **The Great Thanksgiving**

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

*The Celebrant sings the Preface.*

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,

**Sanctus and Benedictus Qui Venit**      *Sung by all, standing*



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - - - ly, Lord God of Hosts:  
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.*

## **The Eucharistic Prayer**

All glory be to thee, O Lord our God, for that thou didst create heaven and earth, and didst make us in thine own image; and, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him, and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption. He made there a full and perfect sacrifice for 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 to thee, he broke 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 this, all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant, 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, we thy people do celebrate and make, 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; and looking for his coming again with power and great glory. And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us, and, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, to bless and sanctify these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the Body and Blood of thy dearly-beloved Son Jesus Christ. And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, whereby we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies.

Grant, we beseech thee, that all who partake of this Holy Communion may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, and be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction; and also that we and all thy whole Church may be made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. **Amen.**

And now, as our Savior Christ hath commanded and 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 Breaking of The Bread***

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

***Agnus Dei*** from Missa Rorate Caeli

*Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)*

*Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.*

*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 received at the chancel step. Please move at the direction of the ushers.*

**Motet during Communion:** *'In the Bleak Midwinter'* Harold Darke (1888-1976)

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan.  
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone.  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow.  
In the bleak midwinter long ago.*

*Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain.  
Heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign.  
In the bleak midwinter, a stable-place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.*

*Enough for him whom cherubim worshipped night and day,  
A breast full of milk and a manger full of hay;  
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,  
The ox and ass and camel which adore.*

*What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part,  
But what I can I give him, give him my heart.*

*Text: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)*

*After Communion, all kneel.*

**Prayers After Communion** Said by the Celebrant

O God, who didst wonderfully create, and yet more wonderfully restore, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Almighty God, who by the incarnation of thy only-begotten Son hast banished the darkness of this world, and by his glorious birth didst enlighten this most holy night: Drive away from us, we pray, the darkness of sin, and illuminate our hearts with the glory of thy redeeming grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Remain kneeling for the Carol.*

**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 afar,  
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.**

*All remain kneeling.*

***The Blessing and Dismissal***

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

***Carol***

**Hark! The herald angels sing "Glory to the new-born king;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."  
Joyful all ye nations rise; join the triumph of the skies;  
With angelic host proclaim "Christ is born in Bethlehem."  
*Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the new-born king!"***

**Christ by highest heaven adored; Christ the everlasting Lord!  
Late in time behold Him come, offspring of a Virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see. Hail th'incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel  
*Hark! The herald angels sing "Glory to the newborn King!"***

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings;  
Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die.  
Born to raise the sons of earth; born to give them second birth.  
*Hark! The herald angels sing "Glory to the new-born king!"***

***Organ*** Voluntary on 'Regent Square'

*Edwin C. Johnson (1898-1984)*

***Upcoming Services at Bethesda Church***

*Christmas Day* 9am *Holy Communion*

*31 December* 9am *Holy Communion*

*7 January 2024* 8am *Holy Communion*  
10am *Sung Eucharist*



***Please place this form in the collection plate if you would like us to get in touch with you:***

*Name (s):*

*Phone:*

*Email address:*

*Home address:*

*Preferred contact method:*

*Contact Reason(s):*

- Visitor or new resident
- Would like more information about the church and/or worship
- Interested in opportunities to serve
- Would like to speak with or have a visit from the priest
- Would like information about pledge envelopes or regular giving to Bethesda
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

*Fr Charles Wallace, Priest-in-Charge*

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