

Bethesda Episcopal Church

Advent Sunday

1 December 2024

Organ Divinum Mysterium

Wilbur Held (1914-2015)

All stand as the choir and minsters enter.

The Advent Prose



Drop down, ye hea-vens, from a - bove,* and let the skies pour down right - eous - ness.

The Cantor intones the antiphon. All repeat.

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 Savior: 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.**

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."

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

All sit.

The First Reading

Jeremiah 33:14-16

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Remain seated.

The Gradual: Psalm 25: 1-9

Tone I.4



1 TO YOU, O LORD, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you; *
let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies tri-umph over me.

2 **Let none who look to you be put to shame; ***
let the treacherous be disapoint-ed in their schemes.

3 Show me your ways, O LORD, *
and teach me your paths.

4 **Lead me in your truth and teach me, ***
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all the day long.

5 Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, *
for they are from ev-er-last-ing.

6 **Remember not the sins of my youth and my trans-gres-sions; ***
remember me according to your love
and for the sake of your good-ness, O LORD.

7 Gracious and upright is the LORD; *
therefore he teaches sin-ners in his way.

8 **He guides the humble in do-ing right ***
and teaches his way to the low-ly.

9 **All the paths of the LORD are love and faith-ful-ness ***
to those who keep his covenant and his tes-ti-mo-nies.

The Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and

restore whatever is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

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

Luke 21:25-36

*Celebrant
People*

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

Jesus said, "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to thee, O Christ.

The Sermon

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 Episcopal Church of South Sudan. In the Albany Diocese, we pray for Jeremiah, our bishop and for the clergy and people of the Church of the Messiah, Glens Falls.

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 homeless, the outcast, and the sick, especially Christopher and Manuel. Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For all who have gone before us, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, remembering at this time, Audrey Ball. 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.**

Celebrant: Grant these prayers, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. **Amen.**

The Confession and Absolution

Celebrant: Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God.

**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.**

Celebrant: 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

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **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>Celebrant</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,

The Sanctus and Benedictus

John Merbecke (1510-1585)

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly Lord God of hosts.

5
Hea-ven and earth are full of thy glo - ry. Glo - ry be to thee, O Lord Most High.

7
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
People*

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
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 ‘*Missa Brevis Rorate Coeli*’ *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 distributed at the high altar. Please move at the direction of the ushers.

Choir: E'en So, Lord Jesus *Paul Manz (1919-2009)*

*Peace be to you and grace from him who freed us from our sins;
Who loved us all and shed his blood that we might saved be.
Sing Holy, Holy to our Lord, the Lord, Almighty God,
Who was, and is, and is to come. Sing Holy, Holy Lord.
Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell within;
Rejoice on earth, ye saints below, for Christ is coming, is coming soon,
For Christ is coming soon.
E'en so Lord Jesus, quickly come, and night shall be no more.
They need no light, nor lamp, nor sun, for Christ will be their All!*

After Communion, all kneel. The Celebrant says

The Prayer after Communion

Let us pray. 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.**

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

The Closing Hymn #59

From the Hymnal 1982

Organ Praeludium

Hermann Schroeder (1904-1984)

Parish Notices

Welcome to Bethesda Church. If you are new to Bethesda and interested in learning more about our parish, introduce yourself to an usher or to the Rector, Fr Wallace.

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.

Thank you to those reading and leading prayers at services today:
8am Mary Withington 10 am Darren Miller and Mary Shartle

Welcome to Starrla Lares, our guest preacher this morning. Starrla is a student at Nashotah House Theological Seminary in Delafield, Wisconsin, and currently a postulant for the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas.

Sunday School Bethesda now offers a Sunday School at the 10am service for children approx. ages 5-9. For more information, please contact office@bethesdachurch.org

Thank you to Judy and Grady Aronstamm for hosting **coffee** following the 10am service.

The **Funeral** for Audrey Ball takes place at Bethesda tomorrow, Monday 2nd, at 11am.

Burke Funeral Home invites all who have lost loved ones in the past year and find the holiday season difficult to an **Interfaith Memorial Service** at Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church, 175 Fifth Avenue, on Tuesday 3 December at 7.30pm. Reception to follow.

Holy Communion at 12.10 resumes this Thursday, 5 December.

Victorian Street Walk The Church will be open on the evening of Thursday 5 December from 6pm to 8.30pm. If you're taking in the Victorian street walk, be sure to drop by for a visit!

Decorating of the Church Please join us on Saturday, 14 December, to prepare the church for Christmas. We'll need help hanging wreaths and garland. Please bring work clothes and gloves.

Christmas Pageant Our annual Christmas Pageant takes place on 15 December at 10am. Please come to support our Sunday School families, parish youth, and the young at heart!

Special Monthly Envelope for December 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. After visiting Bethesda in late autumn 2023, technicians from Foley-Baker, Inc. of Tolland, CT, provided initial feedback and advice concerning ongoing care and maintenance of the organ. Given the important role music plays in Bethesda's liturgical life, the Vestry has agreed that contributions to December's appeal will be directed to organ maintenance.

Christ Church Ballston Spa invites you to its 31st Annual Lessons and Carols featuring music from the Celtic, American and Shape Note traditions. The service takes place on Monday 9th December at 7.30pm. The church is located at the corner of Routes 50 & 67 in Ballston Spa. Reception to follow.

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 foods (including those low in salt, fat & sugar and gluten free) and personal hygiene products (soap, toothpaste/brushes, shampoo, razors, shaving cream, deodorant). Donations may be left in the box by the side door entrance.

Office Hours The office is open Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10.00-noon.

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.

Advent tells us Christ is near...

Today is Advent Sunday, the first day of a new Church year. As we begin this Advent season, our minds turn once again to Christmas and the mystery of the birth of Jesus Christ. At the heart of God's becoming human is God's yearning to move closer to us. The whole of salvation history is a constant, repeating narrative in which fallen humanity separates itself from God. That God, however, is a God of love, who reaches out and calls us back to himself.

Traditionally, Advent is a time when we think about Christ's coming to us in three ways: first at his birth in Bethlehem; second in the sacramental life of faith, as Christ makes himself known in our hearts; and third, at the end of time when we will see him face to face as our judge. In each, God draws close to us, yet he calls us to reciprocate by our drawing closer to him. God's reaching out to us should prompt us to want to know and to love him more deeply.

Advent is not a penitential season in the sense that Lent is; it is a season of expectation, longing and preparation. As the Lord comes close to us in this season, there are many ways in which we can, in turn, reach out to him so that our hearts may be made ready to welcome his presence.

One way of preparing our hearts is through our attendance at worship. In addition to our Sunday services at 8am and 10am, different liturgies will take place over the next few weeks which I encourage you to attend. On 15 December, we present our traditional pageant within the context of the 10am service; and on 22 December, we hold a service of Lessons and Carols. In addition to the Sunday services, you might consider attending on Thursdays at 12.10pm. Making time and space for a quiet celebration of the Eucharist during the week is a wonderful way of preparing for Christmas amid the holiday hurly burly.

Advent is a time of preparation for Christ's birth by consciously drawing close to him through our corporate life of faith together. As we begin a new liturgical year, let's do so with a renewed confidence that the Lord will bless our parish, and help us to grow in number, faithfulness, and love as we live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ together. A blessed Advent to all!

Advent & Christmas at Bethesda

Today, 1 December:

Advent Sunday

8am Holy Communion

10am Sung Eucharist

Thursday, 5 December

12.10pm Holy Communion

Sunday, 8 December:

Advent II

8am Holy Communion

10am Sung Eucharist

Thursday, 12 December

12.10pm Holy Communion

Sunday, 15 December:

Advent III

8am Holy Communion

10am Pageant and Sung Eucharist

Thursday, 19 December

12.10pm Holy Communion

Sunday, 22 December:

Advent IV

8am Holy Communion

10am Lessons and Carols

4pm *Christmas Jazz* with Chuck Lamb, piano

Christmas Eve

4pm Sung Eucharist

10pm Procession and Sung Eucharist

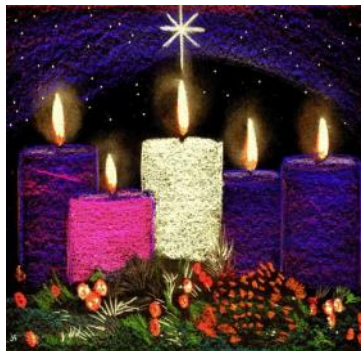
Christmas Day

9am Holy Communion (said)

Sunday, 29 December:

Sunday after Christmas

9am Holy Communion (said)





Christmas Flowers, Greens, Wreaths and Trees

This Christmas season offers an opportunity not only to purchase flowers for the Altar, but to sponsor other decorations that adorn our church at this special time of year. If you would like to contribute, please complete this form and return it to the church office. You can place your completed form in the offering plate or mail it to:

***Bethesda Church Office
178 Elm Street, Suite 5
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866***

I would like to purchase:

_____ Poinsettia for \$25 each.

I would like to contribute towards the following:

_____ Greenery and trees \$_____

Given By: _____

In Honor of: _____

In Memory of: _____

Please return form to the church office before 10 December.