

Bethesda Episcopal Church

The Third Sunday of Advent: Gaudete

15 December 2024

Organ Meditation on *Duke Street*

Paul Fey (b. 1998)

All stand as the choir and minsters enter.

The Entrance Hymn #61

From the Hymnal 1982

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath and Collect of the Day

At the chancel step, the Celebrant says

Celebrant: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with thy spirit.**

The candle for the Third Sunday of Advent is lit.

Celebrant: Light and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Reader: A reading from the Book of the prophet, Isaiah.

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

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. **Amen.**

All sit.

The First Reading

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I



Al - le - lu - ia. _____

Cantor: Stir up thy strength, O Lord; and come and help us. (Ps 80: 2)

All repeat: **Alleluia.**

Remain standing.

The Holy Gospel

Luke 3:7-18

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

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

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

After the Gospel, all sit.

The Christmas Pageant

The congregation is invited to participate in the pageant by singing the first verse of each carol.

Following the pageant, all kneel.

The Prayers of the People, Confession and Absolution

In our Anglican Cycle of Prayer this week, we pray for the Church in Korea; and in our own parish community, we ask God's blessing on those who are sick, anxious or bereaved, that they will be strengthened by the knowledge of Christ's love; and we give thanks for Lydia who received the sacrament of baptism yesterday.

We remember with thanksgiving those who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this week, and whose year's mind falls at this time.

In joyful expectation, let us pray to our Savior and Redeemer, saying, "*Lord Jesus, come soon!*"

O Wisdom, from the mouth of the Most High, you reign over all things to the ends of the earth: come and teach us how to live. **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

O Lord, and head of the house of Israel, you appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and you gave the law on Sinai: come with outstretched arm and ransom us. **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

O Branch of Jesse, standing as a sign among the nations, all kings will keep silence before you and all peoples will summon you to their aid: come, set us free and delay no more. **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

O Morning Star, splendor of the light eternal and bright Sun of righteousness: come and enlighten all who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death. **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

O King of the nations, you alone can fulfil their desires: Cornerstone, you make opposing nations one: come and save the creature you fashioned from clay. **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

O Emmanuel, hope of the nations and their Savior: come and save us, Lord our God. **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

Celebrant: 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.**

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

**Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against thee
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved thee with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ,**

**have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in thy will,
and walk in thy ways,
to the glory of thy Name. Amen.**

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. 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 #72

From the Hymnal 1982

Remain standing.

The Eucharistic Prayer

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.**

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 send thy beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing. 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)





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, 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.**

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 Agnus Dei

Orlando di Lasso (1532-1594)

*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: *Rejoice in the Lord always* *Anonymous 16th c.*

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. Let your softness be known unto all men; the Lord is e'en at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in all prayer and supplication, let your petitions be manifest unto God with giving of thanks. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesu. Amen.

Text: Philippians 4: 4-7

Communion Hymn #53

From the Hymnal 1982

After Communion, all kneel.

The Post Communion Prayer *Said by the Celebrant.*

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 #66

From the Hymnal 1982

Organ Fanfare on *Veni Emmanuel*

Paul Fey (b. 1998)

Today at Bethesda

Welcome! Thank you for joining us this morning. If you are new to the community and interested in becoming a member of Bethesda, introduce yourself to an usher or to Fr Wallace for more information.

Thank you to those reading and leading prayers at services today:
8am Lynne Priestley 10 am Joyce Cole and Daniel Beach

Please join us for **coffee and refreshments** following the 10am service. Thank you to Tim Holmes and Libby Smith-Holmes for hosting today.

Thank you to all who helped decorate the church for Christmas.

The **Midweek Communion** continues this Thursday, 19 December, at 12.10pm. This is the final midweek Communion service until 30 January.

Bethesda Church holds its annual **Festival of Lessons and Carols** (in the context of the Eucharist) next Sunday, 22 December at 10am.

Concert at Bethesda Next Sunday, 22 December at 3pm, please join us for Christmas & holiday jazz with Chuck Lamb on piano and uplifting original songs by singer/songwriter Ria Curley. Admission by donation.

Year-End Gifts to Bethesda Please remember Bethesda in your Christmas and end-of-year giving plans. Our ministry and parish operations depend on your faithful support. Tax receipts are issued for gifts received on or before December 31st.

Office Hours The office is open this week Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in preparation for Christmas services. Please call ahead if you're dropping by.

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.

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.

Beyond the Parish & Outreach

All Saints' Cathedral Choir sings **A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols** on Tuesday, 17 December at 7pm. Prelude music for organ and brass begins at 6.30pm. Free admission. The Cathedral is located at the corner of South Swan and Elk, in Albany.

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 food on behalf of LifeWorks. You may leave items in the box by the side door entrance of the church. Thank you!



Advent III: Gaudete

"I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

The Third Sunday of Advent is also known as *Gaudete* or Rejoice Sunday, when, on the Advent wreath we light a candle representing John the Baptist. This week, we are not lighting a sombre purple candle, but a jolly pink one! Rose pink, to be precise; a color that originally signified a lightening of the mood and a relaxing of the disciplines of Advent when more rigorous observances were traditionally kept during the Middle Ages. The name *Gaudete* was taken from the first word of the introit appointed for this Sunday in the Latin mass: *Gaudete in Domino semper* or "Rejoice in the Lord always." Though we are still in 'waiting mode', **Christmas is coming!** - and with it, good news of great joy for all people.

Curley Lamb Christmas & Holiday Jazz

With Ria Curley & Chuck Lamb

Sunday, December 22, 2024

3pm

At Bethesda Episcopal Church

26 Washington Street, Saratoga Springs NY

Admission is by donation



Advent & Christmas at Bethesda

Thursday, 19 December 12.10pm Holy Communion

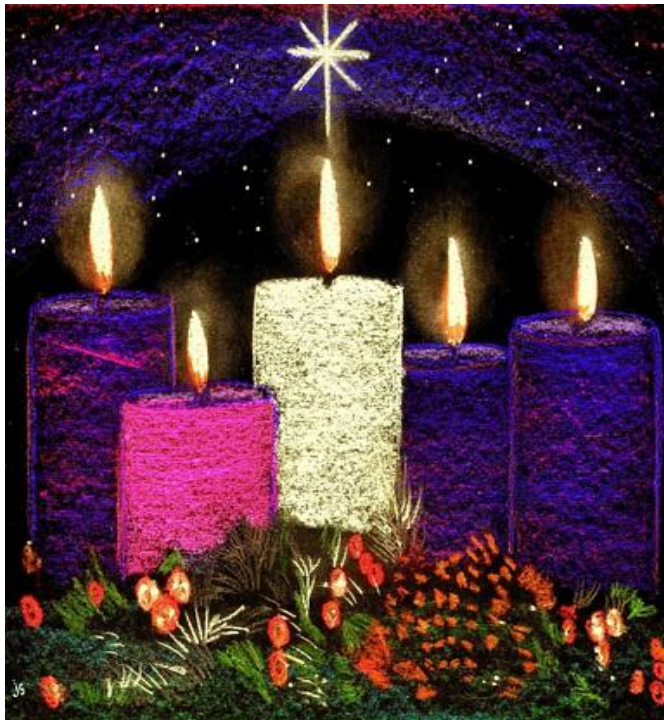
Sunday, 22 December: **Advent IV**
8am Holy Communion
10am Lessons & Carols
3pm Jazz Concert (*for info see p.10*)

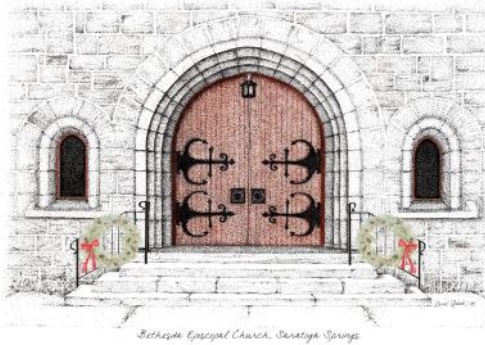
Christmas Eve 4pm Sung Eucharist
10pm Procession and Sung Eucharist

Christmas Day 9am Holy Communion (said)

Sunday, 29 December **Sunday after Christmas**
9am Holy Communion (said)

Sunday, 5 January 2025: **Feast of the Epiphany**
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:

Phone:

Email address:

Home address:

Preferred contact method:

Contact Reason:

- 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, Rector

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