

Bethesda Episcopal Church

Christmas Eve 2024

4.00pm Sung Eucharist

Please switch off your cell phone before the Liturgy begins.

Music before the Service

Preludes on Christmas Tunes:

Quem Pastores
In Dulci Jubilo
Divinum Mysterium
Irby

*Helmut Walcha (1907-1991)
Marcel Dupré (1886-1971)
Wilbur Held (1914-2015)
Robert Buckley Farlee (b. 1950)*

Derek Stannard, Organ

All stand as the ministers enter.

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 ...**

**See, how the shepherds,
Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither, Bend our joyful footsteps;
O come, let us adore him ...**

**Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, glory in the highest:
O come, let us adore him ...**

All turn and face the crib for the blessing. Remain standing.

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.**

The Procession moves to the chancel.

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.**

Remain standing.

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

Let us pray. Almighty God, who has poured upon us the new light of thine incarnate Word: Grant that the same light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **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 Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

All stand.

Carol

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**

Remain standing.

The Holy Gospel

Luke 2.1-20

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

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region, there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of

David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

The Sermon

Fr Wallace

After the sermon, all kneel.

The Prayers of the People

In our prayers today, we remember the Episcopal Church of the Philippines; and our bishop, Jeremiah Williamson and his family. We ask God's blessing on those who find the holiday season difficult, especially those who are sick, lonely, anxious or bereaved; that they may be strengthened by the knowledge of Christ's love and mercy.

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 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**

Celebrant: O God, who makest us glad by 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.**

Remain kneeling.

The Confession and Absolution

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, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All stand. Please remain in your place during the exchange of the Peace.

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

All stand. During the Carol, a collection is received to support the ministry of Bethesda.

At The Offertory:

**What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?**

***This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!***

**Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading. *This, this is Christ, the King...***

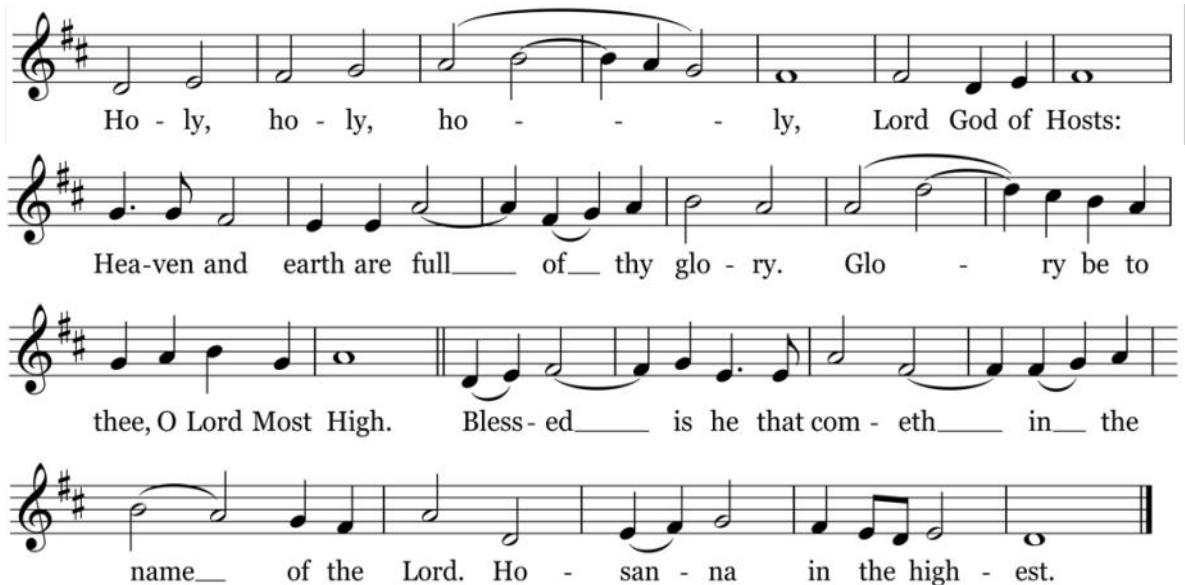
**So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him. *This, this is Christ, the King...***

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 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,



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.

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.**

The Lord's Prayer and Fraction

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.

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

Communion is received at the high altar. Please move at the direction of the ushers.

After Communion, all kneel.

The Prayer 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.**

Remain kneeling.

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...**

**Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born...**

**Silent night, holy night!
Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth...**

Remain kneeling for the Blessing.

May Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace this Christmas and all the days of your life; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

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

All stand to sing the Carol.

**Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
Let us our songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.**

Organ Voluntary on 'Regent Square'

Edwin C. Johnson (1898-1984)

A warm **welcome** and a very **Merry Christmas** to all. If you wish to learn more about this parish community, please contact Fr Wallace or the office: office@bethesdachurch.org

Thank you to Elizabeth Sterling, *soprano*, for singing at this service.

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.

Upcoming Services:	Christmas Day	9am Holy Communion
	29 December	9am Holy Communion
	5 January 2025	8am & 10am Holy Communion