

Bethesda Episcopal Church

Advent Sunday

30 November 2025

8.00 Holy Communion

*The order of service is printed on the laminated card.
The Reading, Gospel, and Prayers of the People can be found below.*

10.00 Sung Eucharist

Organ *Burleigh (My Lord, What a Morning)* *Richard Billingham (1934-2022)*

All stand as the choir and ministers enter.

The Entrance Hymn #59

From the Hymnal 1982

Remain standing. At the chancel step, the Celebrant says

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

Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

The candle for Advent Sunday is lit.

Light and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thanks be to God.

A reading from the Book of the prophet Isaiah. (9.2)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - upon them, light has shined.

The Celebrant says the Collect of the Day.

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

Isaiah 2:1-5

A reading from the Book of the prophet Isaiah.

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples

shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Remain seated. The Choir sings

The Gradual: Psalm 122

Thomas Clark (1775-1859)

I'm glad, when to the house of God, "Go up" they say to me,
Jerusalem, within thy gates our feet shall standing be.

The tribes go up, the tribes of God, to praise the Lord and pray,
For thrones of judgement, e'en the thrones of David's house, there stay.

Now for my friends' and brethren's sake, "Peace be in thee" I say,
And for the house of God our Lord, I'll seek thy good away.

The Second Reading

Romans 13:11-14

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans.

You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

All stand.

The Alleluia



Verse: Show us thy mercy, O Lord; and grant us thy salvation. **Alleluia.**

Remain standing.

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

Jesus said to the disciples, "But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. 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 Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to thee, O Christ.

The Sermon

After the sermon, 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

In our Intercessions this week, we pray for the Anglican Communion, and the Church in Australia; and in the Albany Diocese, we remember Jeremiah, our Bishop, and the 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 pray with confidence before our Maker and Redeemer, saying, *Lord, have mercy.*

That God may bring in his kingdom with justice and mercy, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

That God may establish among the nations his sceptre of righteousness, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

That we may seek Christ in the Scriptures and recognize him in the breaking of the bread, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

That God may bind up the broken-hearted, restore the sick and raise up all who have fallen, especially Jane, Andrea, Holly, Francisco, Opa and Jenny, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

That the light of God's coming may dawn on all who live in darkness and the shadow of death, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

That, with all the saints in light, we may shine forth as lights for the world, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

We commend ourselves and all for whom we pray to the mercy and protection of our heavenly Father.

Celebrant: Almighty God, as your blessed Son Jesus Christ first came to seek and save the lost; so may he come again to find in us the completion of his redeeming work; for he is now alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Confession and Absolution

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, you may greet those around you in the name of the Lord.

The Peace

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

Hymn at the Offertory #57

From the Hymnal 1982

Remain standing.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.
 Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up unto the Lord.
 Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.
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)

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. The Celebrant says the Eucharistic Prayer (p. 334 of the BCP), which concludes,

... 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.**

The Lord's Prayer

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

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 the Missa Brevis on Bach Chorales

Healey Willan (1880-1968)

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 altar rail. Please move at the direction of the ushers.

Choir: Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (Cantata 147)

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Jesu, joy of man's desiring, Holy Wisdom, Love most bright,
Drawn by Thee, our souls aspiring, soar to uncreated light.
Word of God, our flesh that fashioned with the fire of life impassioned.
Striving still to Truth unknown, soaring, dying round Thy throne.

Through the way where Hope is guiding, hark what peaceful music rings,
Where the flock, in Thee confiding, drink of joy from deathless springs.
Theirs is beauty's fairest pleasure; theirs is wisdom's holiest treasure.
Thou dost ever lead Thine own in the love of joys unknown.

Text: German poem by Martin Janus, 1664; English paraphrase by Robert Bridges, 1899

Communion Hymn #53 (remain seated or kneeling)

From the Hymnal 1982

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 passes 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 Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

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

The Closing Hymn #71

From the Hymnal 1982

Organ Bereden väg för Herran (Prepare the Way, O Zion) *Paul Manz (1919-2009)*

Welcome to Bethesda Church. Thank you for joining us this morning. If you are interested in becoming a member of the parish, introduce yourself to an usher, or complete the form on the back page of this bulletin and place it in the collection plate.

Thank you to those reading and leading prayers: at 8am Mary Withington; and at 10am Bob Bullock and Paula Pinion.

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 creative floral arrangements. He continues to be fondly remembered, especially during the Advent-Christmas and Easter seasons.

Join us for **coffee and fellowship** following the 10am service. Thank you to our hosts, Tim and Claire Wood.

Holy Communion - Thursday at 12.10. All welcome

Advent Discussion Group As we prepare to celebrate Our Lord's Nativity, we will study a selection of homilies on the Incarnation by the early Church Fathers, and how their timeless insights can deepen our faith this season. We will meet via Zoom at 7.30pm on Tuesday 2nd Dec. and Sunday 7th, 14th, and 21st December. Contact jkimmel@cathedralofallsaints.org

Victorian Street Walk The Church will be open Thursday 4 December from 6pm to 8.30pm. All welcome!

Greening the Church Join us Saturday, 13 December, to prepare the church for Christmas. We'll need help hanging wreaths and garland. Bring work clothes and gloves.

Christmas Pageant Our annual Christmas Pageant takes place on 14 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.

Concert: The Choir of All Saints' Cathedral, Albany, presents Handel's oratorio, '**Messiah**' Tuesday 9 December at 7pm at the Cathedral, South Swan and Elk Streets. For info and tickets: www.cathedralofallsaints.org

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 and personal hygiene products. Donations may be left in the box by the side door entrance.

Parking The lot adjacent to the church, which is accessible via Congress Street, offers free parking for the first two hours.



The Visitation of Mary to her cousin, Elizabeth – Rogier van der Weyden, 15th c.

Advent tells us Christ is near...

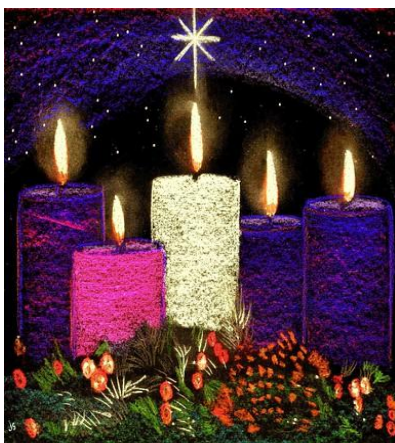
Today is Advent Sunday, the first day of a new Church year. As we begin the Advent season, our minds turn once again to Christmas and the mystery of the birth of Jesus Christ. At the heart of God's becoming human is God's yearning to move closer to us. The whole of salvation history is a constant, repeating 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 you are encouraged to attend. On 14 December, we present our traditional pageant within the context of the 10am service; and on 21 December, we hold a service of Lessons and Carols. In addition to the Sunday services, you might make time during the week to come to 12.10 service on Thursdays. This quiet celebration of the Eucharist 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. 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 faith, love, and service as we live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ together.



Advent & Christmas at Bethesda Church

Today, 30 November	Advent Sunday Services at 8am and 10am
Thursday, 4 December	12.10pm Holy Communion 6pm Victorian Street Walk – church open
Sunday, 7 December	Advent II Services at 8am and 10am
Thursday, 11 December	12.10pm Holy Communion
Saturday, 13 December	9am Decorating & Greening of the Church
Sunday, 14 December	Advent III 8am Holy Communion 10am Pageant and Sung Eucharist
Thursday, 18 December	12.10pm Holy Communion
Sunday, 21 December	Advent IV 8am Holy Communion 10am Lessons and Carols
Christmas Eve	4pm Sung Eucharist 10pm Blessing of the Crib and Sung Eucharist
Christmas Day	9am Holy Communion (said)
Sunday, 28 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 on 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.



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 _____

The Reverend Charles Wallace, Rector

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