

# ***Bethesda Episcopal Church***

**The Second Sunday of Advent**

**7 December 2025**

**Organ**      Of the Father's Love Begotten

*Wilbur Held (1914-2015)*

*All stand as the choir and ministers enter.*

***The Entrance Hymn #76***

*From the Hymnal 1982*

*All 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 the Second Sunday of Advent is lit.*

Light and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

A reading from the Book of the prophet Malachi. (3.1)

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight-- indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

***The Collect of the Day***

Let us pray. Merciful God, who didst send thy messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*All sit.*

***The First Reading***

*Isaiah 11:1-10*

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Remain seated. The Choir sings*

***The Gradual*** Psalm 72

*Steven Elvey (1805-1860)*

Give the King your justice, O God, \* and your righteousness to the King's Son;  
That he may rule your people righteously \* and the poor with justice;  
He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure, \* from one generation to another.

In his time shall the righteous flourish; \*  
there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, \* who alone does wondrous deeds!  
And blessed be his glorious Name forever! \*  
and may all the earth be filled with his glory. Amen.

*Remain seated.*

***The Second Reading***

*Romans 15:4-13*

Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name"; and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope."

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*All stand.*

### ***The Alleluia***



*Verse:* I was glad when they said unto me; we will go into the house of the Lord.  
**Alleluia.**

*Remain standing.*

### ***The Holy Gospel***

*Matthew 3:1-12*

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

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”

Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume 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.

“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to thee, O Christ.**

### ***The Sermon***

*Fr Kriss*

*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 for the Church in Bangladesh; in the Albany Diocese, we remember Jeremiah, our bishop, and the people of St. John's in the Wilderness, Paul Smiths. We ask God's blessing on those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries, 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 goodwill 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 Jane, Andrea, Holly, Francisco, Kim, Opa and Jenny, 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:* 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.**

*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, 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 #613**

*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. You may follow the text on page 334 of the black prayer book. The prayer 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.*

## ***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***

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 Quinti Toni

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

*During Communion, the Choir sings*

Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Joannes. Hic venit in testimonium,  
ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine, et pararet Domino plebem perfectam.

*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness,  
to bear testimony about the light, and to prepare for the Lord a perfect people.*

*Music: G. P. da Palestrina (1526-1594)      Text: John 1: 6-7*

***Communion Hymn #75*** (remain seated)

*From the Hymnal 1982*

*After Communion, all kneel.*

## ***The Prayer after Communion***

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 #73***

*From the Hymnal 1982*

**Organ** Fantasia on 'Savior of the Nations Come'

*Craig A. Penfield (b.1948)*

### **Parish Notices**

**Welcome!** Thank you for worshipping with us this morning. If you are interested in learning more about Bethesda Church, please introduce yourself to an usher.

Thank you to those **reading and leading prayers**: at 8am Bob Bullock; and at 10am Gabriel Francisco and Libby Smith-Holmes.

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

**Holy Communion - Thursdays** at 12.10.

**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. Today is the last day to donate towards the cost of decorating the Church for Christmas. See page 11 of this bulletin for the order form.

**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!

The C.S. Lewis Study group on **Mere Christianity** meets on Sunday 21 December at 9am.

Bethesda holds its annual **Festival of Lessons and Carols** on 21 December at 10am.

Advance Notice: Bethesda's **Annual Meeting** will be held on 1st February following the 10am service.



**Office** Hours this week are Tuesday & Wednesday 10.00—noon, and Thursday 1 - 3.30pm.

**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 several 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.

**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.

**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.

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

### **Advent - Christmas – New Year Events in the Diocese of Albany**

**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](http://www.cathedralofallsaints.org)

The Parish of **Christ Church Ballston Spa** invites you to its 32nd Annual **Lessons and Carols** featuring music from the Celtic, American and Shape Note traditions. The service takes place **this evening**, Sunday 7th December at 6pm. The church is located at the corner of Routes 50 & 67 in Ballston Spa. Free admission.

**Hoosac School**, located in Hoosick, NY, invites members of Bethesda to attend their annual Boar's Head Pageant the evening of Thursday 11 December. For further information, please contact the church office: 518.584.5980.

All Saints' Cathedral presents **A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols** on Tuesday, 23rd December at 7pm, with music for brass and organ beginning at 6:30 PM. Free admission. The Cathedral is located at the corner of South Swan and Elk, in Albany.

The annual flower festival, **Cathedral in Bloom**, will be held 16 – 18 January 2026 at All Saints' Cathedral, Albany. For further information and to purchase tickets, consult [www.cathedralofallsaints.org](http://www.cathedralofallsaints.org)



### ***Prepare the way of the Lord!***

Pictured above is a mosaic of Isaiah the prophet, from the Church of Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome. The prophets—those who foretold the coming of Christ and who witnessed to God’s kingdom of justice and righteousness—are represented by the second candle on the Advent wreath that we will light this morning. The Gospel reading today from St Matthew chapter 3, quotes from the prophecy of Isaiah: *The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight!’* These words are fulfilled in the preaching of John the Baptist. And so, in these ‘waiting days’ of Advent, let us seek to prepare the way for Christ’s coming in blazing glory as Lord and Judge, and in the unexpected, unlooked-for simplicity of Bethlehem.

### **Advent & Christmas Services at Bethesda**

Thursday, 11 December	12.10pm Holy Communion
<b><i>Sunday, 14 December</i></b>	<b>Advent III</b> 8am Holy Communion 10am Pageant and Sung Eucharist
Thursday, 18 December	12.10pm Holy Communion
<b><i>Sunday, 21 December</i></b>	<b>Advent IV</b> 8am Holy Communion 10am Lessons and Carols
<b><i>Christmas Eve</i></b>	<b>4pm</b> Sung Eucharist <b>10pm</b> Procession and Sung Eucharist
<b><i>Christmas Day</i></b>	<b>9am</b> Holy Communion (said)
<b><i>Sunday, 28 December</i></b>	<b>Sunday after Christmas</b> 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 this form to the church TODAY***



***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*

Office Email: [office@bethesdachurch.org](mailto:office@bethesdachurch.org)

Office Telephone: (518) 584-5980

Website: [bethesdachurch.org](http://bethesdachurch.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bethesdaepiscopalchurch>

Bethesda Episcopal Church Office

178 Elm Street, Suite 5

Saratoga Springs NY 12866