

# ***Bethesda Episcopal Church***

**The Sunday after Christmas**

**28 December 2025**

## **9.00am Holy Communion**

*The people standing, the Celebrant says*

Alleluia. Unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given.  
**O Come, let us adore him. Alleluia.**

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## ***The Gloria in Excelsis***

Glory be to God on high,  
**and on earth peace, good will towards men.**

**We praise thee, we bless thee,  
we worship thee,  
we glorify thee,  
we give thanks to thee for thy great glory,  
O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.  
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;  
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
that takest away the sins of the world,  
have mercy upon us.**

**Thou that takest away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer.  
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father,  
have mercy upon us.**

**For thou only art holy;  
thou only art the Lord;  
thou only, O Christ,  
with the Holy Ghost,  
art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

## ***The Collect of the Day***

The Lord be with you. **And with thy spirit.**

Let us pray. Almighty God, who hast 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 the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*All sit.*

## ***The Reading***

*Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7*

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The Word of the Lord.   **Thanks be to God.**

*All stand.*

## ***The Holy Gospel***

*St John 1.1-18*

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

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

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

*All sit.*

## ***The Blessing of Chalk***

*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, Confession and Absolution***

In our prayers today, we remember the Episcopal Diocese of Albany, our bishop, Jeremiah Williamson, and all clergy and lay staff. We also ask God's blessing on 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.

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 outcast and the homeless; for the helpless, 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.**

*The Celebrant says a concluding prayer.*

Eternal Lord God, the same yesterday, today and for ever: as we prepare to enter a new year, we ask your help in forgetting the mistakes of the past; in facing the challenges of the present. and in renewing our sense of hope for the future, as we go forward in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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. At the exchange of the Peace, you may greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

### ***The Peace***

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

*All sit while the Altar is prepared for Communion. When the Celebrant turns to face the people, all stand.*

### ***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 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,

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts,  
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.  
Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High.  
Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord:  
Hosanna in the highest.**

*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***

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

### ***The Agnus Dei***

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, **have mercy upon us.**  
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, **grant us thy peace.**

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

*After Communion, all kneel.*

### ***The Prayer after Communion*** *Said by the Celebrant*

Let us pray. 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.**

## ***The Blessing and Dismissal***

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.**

## **Notices**

A warm **welcome**, and a very happy and blessed New Year to all. If you are visitor and would like to learn more about our parish community, please introduce yourself to Fr Wallace or usher.

**Office** The parish office on Elm Street will be closed until Tuesday, 14 January 2026.

**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 or postmarked no later than December 31st.

**Annual Pledging in 2026.** Your financial support is vital to the ministry of Bethesda Church. It is not too late to make a pledge for 2026. Cards are available at the back of the church. Those who requested **Giving Envelopes** for 2026 can now collect them on the back table. If you cannot find a box with your name on it, or wish to subscribe, please contact the office.

**The Annual Parish Meeting** is scheduled for Sunday 1st February. The meeting will take place following the 10am Sung Eucharist.

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

## **Services next Sunday: 4 January 2026**

**8am Holy Communion**

**10am Sung Eucharist**

The Reverend Charles Wallace, *Rector*

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## ***A Prayer for Blessing your Home at Epiphany***

*Begin by saying:*

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Using the blessed chalk, near your front door (on a wall, lintel, or step)  
write the following:*

**20 + C + M + B + 26**

*Then, say this prayer:*

The Three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, followed the star of God's Son  
who became human two thousand and twenty-six years ago.

May Christ bless *our (my)* home and remain with *us* throughout this new year.  
Amen.

*You may also add the following prayer:*

Visit, O Lord, this dwelling,  
and drive far from it all snares of the enemy;  
let your holy Angels dwell herein, to preserve *us* in peace;  
and let your blessing be upon us for evermore;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

