

# Bethesda Episcopal Church

**The Second Sunday after Christmas: Epiphany**

**4 January 2026**

## **8.00 Holy Communion**

*The order of service is printed on the laminated card.*

*The Reading (Isaiah), Gospel (Matthew) and Prayers of the People (on p.3) may be found below.*

## **10.00 Sung Eucharist**

**Organ**      Pastorale from *Oratorio de Noel*, Op. 12      *Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)*

*All stand as the ministers enter. The Celebrant says*

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

Dear friends in Christ, God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to his table. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments, and to live in love and peace with all.

*All kneel. After a period of silence, the Celebrant begins the Confession, saying*

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.*

**The Opening Hymn #119**

*From the Hymnal 1982*

*Remain standing.*

**The Collect of the Day**

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

Let us pray. O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know thee now by faith, to thy presence, where we may behold thy glory face to face; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*All sit.*

### **The Reading**

*Isaiah 60:1-6*

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*All stand.*

### **The Gradual Hymn #115**

*From the Hymnal 1982*

*Remain standing.*

### **The Holy Gospel**

*St Matthew 2.1-12*

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Matthew.

**Glory be to thee, O Lord.**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage.

Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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

### ***The Sermon***

*Dr David Olsen*

*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 the Anglican Communion this week, we remember the Church in the Province of Central Africa. In the Albany Diocese, we pray for Jeremiah, our bishop, and the parish of Christ

Church, Ballston Spa as they begin a period of transition following the retirement of their Rector, Fr Derik Roy. We ask God's blessing on those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this week; and those whose year's mind falls at this time.

At the Epiphany, Wise Men knelt before the newborn King. Let us also worship him with great joy, and make our prayer to his heavenly Father, saying, Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord God, the Wise Men came from the east to worship your Son: grant to Christians everywhere a true spirit of adoration. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your Son is the King of kings and Lord of lords: grant an abundance of peace to your world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father, the Holy Family shared the life of the people of Nazareth: protect in your mercy our families, friends and neighbors. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your Son was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor: show your love for the poor and powerless. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Eternal God, the Wise Men presented to your Son gold, frankincense and myrrh: accept the gifts we bring, and the offering of our hearts at the beginning of this new year. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You are the King of heaven, the hope of all who trust in you: give to all the faithful departed the wonders of your salvation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Rejoicing in the fellowship of the Wise Men, shepherds, and angels, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, we commend ourselves and all people to your unfailing love. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

*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.**

*All stand. During 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 #109***

*From the Hymnal 1982*

*Remain standing.*

### ***The Eucharistic Prayer***

The Lord be with you.

**And with thy spirit.**

Lift up your hearts.

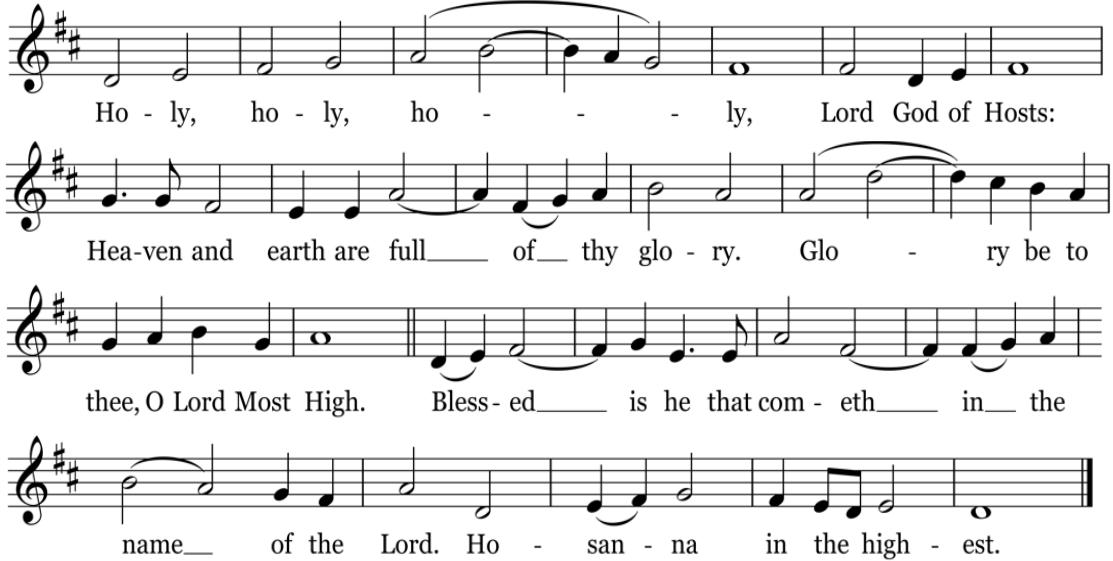
**We lift them up unto the Lord.**

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 in the mystery of the Word made flesh, thou hast caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of thy glory in the face of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying,

*Healey Willan (1880-1968)*



*All kneel. The Celebrant says the Eucharistic Prayer printed on p. 341 of the Book of Common Prayer. The prayer concludes,*

... 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***

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

***The Agnus Dei*** The text and music may be found on page **S-158** of the Hymnal.

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

After Communion, all kneel.

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

Let us pray. Almighty and ever living God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom. And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. 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 #107***

*From the Hymnal 1982*

**Organ**      Improvisation on 'Joy to the World'



***The Epiphany***, also known as the *Theophany in the Orthodox East*, is a Christian feast day that celebrates the revelation of God incarnate as Jesus Christ. In Western Christianity, the feast commemorates principally the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child, and thus Jesus Christ's physical manifestation to the Gentile world. Eastern Christians, on the other hand, commemorate the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River, seen as his manifestation to the world as the Son of God. The traditional date for the feast is 6<sup>th</sup> January. Those Eastern Churches which are still following the Julian calendar observe the feast on what, according to the internationally used Gregorian calendar, is 19<sup>th</sup> January, because of the current 13-day difference between the Julian and Gregorian calendars.

## **Notices**

**Welcome to Bethesda Church.** Thank you for joining us this morning. If you are interested in becoming a member of the parish, please introduce yourself to an usher.

**Thank you** to Dr David Olsen, for preaching this morning, and to those reading and leading prayers at 8am Bob Bullock; and at 10am Daniel Beach and Joyce Cole.

Join us for **coffee and fellowship** following the 10am service. If you are able to provide refreshments in January and/or February 2026, sign your name on the sheet in the narthex.

After today's 10am service, we will be removing **Christmas flowers and greenery** from the church. Any assistance would be gratefully received!

**Chalk**, blessed at the Eucharist last Sunday, is available at back of the church for those who wish to ask God's blessing on their home. A short service outline is printed on the back page of this bulletin.

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

**Holy Communion on Thursdays** will resume in February.

**Special Monthly Envelope for January.** The special monthly envelope for the month of January assists the church with the cost of fuel during the winter months. We are grateful for your assistance and generosity.

**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.

**Cathedral in Bloom** from 16-18 January is the area's premier flower show. Enjoy the glory of the architecture of The Cathedral of All Saints in Albany combined with the talents of the some of the Capital Region's and northeast's artists with dozens of displays, workshops and presentations will be offered by floral professionals. Guided and self-guided tours, a café, and a flower market will welcome you, along with organ recitals with music inspired by flowers. To purchase tickets online go to [www.cathedralofallsaints.org/cathedral-in-bloom](http://www.cathedralofallsaints.org/cathedral-in-bloom)

## ***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, offer 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 say 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.

