

**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NORTHAMPTON MA**  
**Holy Eucharist for the first Sunday of Christmas**  
**December 27, 2020**

**Organ Prelude**

Dr. Grant Moss

**Welcome and Announcements**

*Presider*      Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*People*        **And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

**Collect for Purity**

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known,  
And from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
By the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you,  
And worthily magnify your Holy Name through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Song of Praise**

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

**The Collect of the Day**

*Presider*      The Lord be with you.

*People*        **And also with you.**

*Presider*      Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

## First Lesson

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

*Isaiah 61:10-62:3*

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm 147:13-21 *Laudate Dominum*

13 Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem; \* praise your God, O Zion;

**14 For he has strengthened the bars of your gates; \***

**he has blessed your children within you.**

15 He has established peace on your borders; \* he satisfies you with the finest wheat.

**16 He sends out his command to the earth, \* and his word runs very swiftly.**

17 He gives snow like wool; \* he scatters hoarfrost like ashes.

**18 He scatters his hail like bread crumbs; \* who can stand against his cold?**

19 He sends forth his word and melts them; \*

he blows with his wind, and the waters flow.

**20 He declares his word to Jacob, \* his statutes and his judgments to Israel.**

21 He has not done so to any other nation; \* to them he has not revealed his judgments.

Hallelujah!

## Second Lesson

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

A reading from the letter to the Galatians.

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.**

## **The Gospel**

*John 1:1-18*

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.  
*People Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

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. *People Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

## **Sermon**

The Rev. Dr. Julianne Buenting+

## **The Nicene Creed** *recited in unison* **BCP pg 358-359**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate  
from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;**

**he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father.**

**With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.**

**He has spoken through the Prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **Prayers of the People**

**Prayers of the People for Christmas** (*Adapted from prayers by Rev. Stephen M. Fearing, Shelter Island Presbyterian Church, NY found on [www.liturgylink.net](http://www.liturgylink.net) )*

God of our Salvation, we gather in praise.

In the beginning, your creative work began with a word,  
and your creation continues with the Word made flesh.

in this holiest of seasons, we join the everlasting chorus saying:

**Glory to God on highest! Great is your name in all the earth!**

Like Mary, we ponder these things in our hearts,  
and wonder how you could love us so much  
as to actually become one of us, one with us.

We remember these stories that remind us of your steadfast love,  
that affirm that you have never, and will never, give up on your children.

**Thank you for your steadfast presence in our lives!**

Yet even as we celebrate the fulfillment of love,  
we recognize that there are many who are still waiting for fulfillment:  
the fulfillment of adequate food and shelter;  
the fulfillment of peace and the end of violence;  
the fulfillment of reprieve from the fierce grip of pandemic and grief;  
the fulfillment of a restoration of relationships and of work and school lives;  
the fulfillment of health in body, mind, and spirit;  
the fulfillment of an end to racism, division, and oppression;  
**Gracious God, give us the courage to do your work in the world.**

We pray for those who have for those who have lost loved ones this year; for health care workers and first responders; and for those on our parish prayer list: David Rosenberger, Lorna, Nancy Elliott, Janet, the Brandt family, Betty and Donnie Willard, Norma Keough, Bre, BettyLou DeTurck, Melissa, Vanessa, Jeanette, the Winternitz family, Mary Thurber, Mary Wozniak and her mother Mildred Lindsay, and our Manna guests and volunteers.

**Healing God, restore your people in body, mind and spirit.**

We pray for all those who have died and for those who mourn, that you gracious will for them may be fulfilled and that they may rest in the presence of divine love now and forever. **Loving God, strengthen us to share your peace and presence.**

*Participants may add additional intercessions and thanksgivings.*

Restore us and make your face to shine that we might be saved.

In all that we do and in all that we are, send your Spirit upon us, that we may share the light of the newborn Savior with our world. **Amen.**

### **Sign of Peace**

The peace of God be with you.

**And also with you.**

### **Offertory Music**

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

*Presider:* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Presider* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Presider* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty Creator of heaven and earth. Because you gave Jesus Christ, your only Son, to be born for us; who, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, was made perfect Man of the flesh of Mary his mother; so that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin, and receive power to become your children. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

*Presider and People*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,  
**We remember his death, we proclaim his resurrection,  
we await his coming in glory;**

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine. We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with St. Mary the God-bearer, St. John and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Gracious God, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

*Presider:* As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,  
**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.**

## **Fraction Anthem**

*Presider:* Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

*People:* **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!**

*Presider:* The gifts of God for the People of God.

## **Prayer of Spiritual Communion** *(adapted from the Prayer Book for the Armed Services)*

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people and your Church,  
we delight to offer to you praise and thanksgiving.

We remember your death, Lord Christ; we proclaim your resurrection;  
we await your coming in glory. Since we cannot receive you today  
in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, we beseech you to come spiritually  
into our hearts. Heal and strengthen us with your grace, Lord Christ,  
and let us never be separated from you. May we live in you, and you in us,  
in this life and in the life to come. **Amen.**

## **Post Communion Prayer** *in unison*

**Almighty and ever-living God,**

**we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food  
of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;  
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries  
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,  
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.**

**And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do,  
to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.**

**To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.**

## **Christmas Blessing**

May Christ, who by his Incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill  
you with his joy and peace; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and  
the Holy Spirit, mother of us all, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

*Presider:* Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, Alleluia, alleluia!

*People:* **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!**

## **Postlude Music**

**Dr. Grant Moss**