



Christmas 2023

*Christmas Eve
at four o'clock in the afternoon*

The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Christmas Eve
December 24, 2023
four o'clock in the afternoon



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL
HOUSTON, TEXAS

We welcome you to Christ Church Cathedral. Since 1839, this Christian community has gathered for worship. To learn more about the ministries we share in this place, you are invited to fill in one of the cards found in the pew rack.

 *The Cathedral is equipped with a hearing loop for assisted listening via telecoil.*

A Family Celebration of Christmas

The Holy Eucharist: Rite Two

THE VERY REV. NATHANIEL KATZ, *Dean*
Celebrant

OPENING VOLUNTARY

Carillon	Leo Sowerby (1895–1968)
Carol Prelude on <i>Greensleeves</i>	Richard Purvis (1913–1994)
Carol Prelude on <i>The holly and the ivy</i>	Herbert Sumsion (1899–1995)

HYMN

Adeste fideles

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come, and behold him
Born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore him,
Christ, the Lord. | 3 See how the shepherds,
Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps;
O come, let us adore him,
Christ, the Lord. |
| 2 Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God,
Glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore him,
Christ, the Lord. | 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing;
O come, let us adore him,
Christ, the Lord. |

— *John Francis Wade (1711–1786)*

The Word of God

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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

Celebrant The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us:

People **And we beheld his glory.**

THE COLLECT FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The people sit.

THE FIRST READING

Isaiah 9:2–7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN

Antioch

- 1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing.
- 2 Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
let us our songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills
and plains, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3 He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love.

THE GOSPEL

Luke 2:1–14

Priest The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped

him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

Priest The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Christmas Play

The people sit and sing the hymns appointed. All children not in the play are invited to come forward and sit in front of the chancel steps.

HYMN 56 *verse 1*

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

HYMN 101 *verses 1 and 2*

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

HYMN 96 *verse 1*

Angels We Have Heard On High

Angels we have heard on high, singing sweetly through the night,
And the mountains in reply, echoing their brave delight.
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

HYMN 109 *verse 1*

The First Noel

The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields as they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell
Born is the King of Israel.

HYMN 128 *verse 1*

We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!

HYMN 79 *verse 5*

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

HYMN 99 *verse 1*

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!
Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.
Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

The play concludes. All children are excused to Reynolds Hall to change out of costumes and we request parents come pick them up and help them return to the Cathedral during the Peace.

This pageant was adapted by Tracey Herzer from a format by the Rev. Rick Lord at Church of the Holy Comforter in Vienna, VA. Used with permission.

The people stand.

THE NICENE CREED

**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 and the Son.**

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.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Leader and People pray responsively, standing.

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

The coming of the Son of God was heralded by the angels' song "Peace on earth, good will toward men": let us pray for the peace of the world, for an end to war, and for justice to reign among the peoples of the earth.

Lord, hear our prayer.

A star rose in the east to proclaim the coming of Christ to all nations and peoples: we pray for all his holy catholic Church, for Michael, our Presiding Bishop, for Andrew, Jeff, Kai, and Hector, our Bishops, and for all who serve God's Church, for the mission of the Church throughout the world and in our own community, and for the salvation of all.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Kings came with offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh: we pray for the leaders of the world, for those in positions of public trust, and for all who serve the common good.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Poor shepherds were the first to hear of the Savior's birth: we pray for the renewal of the earth and all its creatures, for wise and just use of its resources, for those without homes or without work, and all who are in need.

Lord, hear our prayer.

The Holy Family found shelter only in a stable, and the Son of God had only a manger for his cradle: remember, O Lord, the sick and those in the hospital or in any kind of trouble, and all who are alone.

Lord, hear our prayer.

The Son of God received the first gift of human love from Mary his mother: we thank you for our families, friends, and all those we love; and we pray that they may live in peace, health, and safety.

Lord, hear our prayer.

The Lord Jesus came to proclaim the good news of repentance and forgiveness: let us pray now for the grace of his Holy Spirit to change our hearts, and for God's gift of love, mercy, and forgiveness of all our sins.

Lord, hear our prayer.

The Eternal Word of God was born in human flesh, to bring the gospel of hope and life to light: let us pray for all those who have died in the peace of Christ and for all the departed, that they may rest in the hope of the resurrection and life eternal.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Rejoicing with the angels and archangels, with the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, and with all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life to Christ our God.

To you, O Lord our God.

The Celebrant concludes

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 forever. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The Holy Communion

AT THE OFFERTORY

HYMN

Greensleeves

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?

*This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.*

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here the silent word is pleading. (*Refrain*)

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own him;
The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him. (*Refrain*)

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

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

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing. You made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love. And so this day we join with saints and angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing:

SANCTUS AND BENEDICTUS S 125

Richard Proulx (1937–2011)

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER CONTINUES

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God.

Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you. On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice. Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.

In the fullness of time bring us, with all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

And now, as our Savior Christ has 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 BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Celebrant Alleluia, Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

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

The Celebrant says

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

By virtue of their baptism, children are a part of the body of Christ. As full members of our congregation, they are welcome to receive the sacrament of Communion, as they or their parents wish. Anyone who wishes to receive only a blessing should cross their arms over their chest when they come to the altar. Please follow the direction of the ushers to the appropriate location to receive communion.

AT THE ADMINISTRATION

HYMN

Irby

- 1 Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.
- 2 He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor, the scorned, the lowly,
Lived on earth our Savior holy.
- 3 Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing round,
We shall see him; but in heaven,
Where his saints his throne surround:
Christ, revealed to faithful eye,
Set at God's right hand on high.

HYMN

Carol

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.
- 2 For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years
Shall come the time foretold,
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And all the world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

HYMN

In dulci jubilo

1 Good Christian friends, rejoice
 With heart and soul and voice;
 Give ye heed to what we say:
 Jesus Christ is born today;
 Ox and ass before him bow,
 And he is in the manger now.
 Christ is born today!

2 Good Christian friends, rejoice
 With heart and soul and voice;
 Now ye hear of endless bliss;
 Jesus Christ was born for this!
 He hath opened heaven's door,
 And we are blest for evermore.
 Christ was born for this!

3 Good Christian friends, rejoice
 With heart and soul and voice;
 Now ye need not fear the grave:
 Jesus Christ was born to save!
 Calls you one and calls you all
 To gain his everlasting hall.
 Christ was born to save!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Celebrant Let us pray.

Celebrant and People pray, kneeling.

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN

*sung kneeling**Stille Nacht*

1 Silent night, holy night,
 All is calm, all is bright
 Round yon virgin mother and child.
 Holy infant, so tender and mild,
 Sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night, holy night,
 shepherds quake at the sight,
 Glories stream from heaven afar,
 Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
 Christ, the Savior, is born!

3 Silent night, holy night,
 Son of God, love's pure light
 Radiant beams from thy holy face,
 With the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

THE 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, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The people stand.

HYMN

Mendelssohn

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem!
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!</p> | <p>2 Christ, by highest heaven adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity.
Pleased as man with us to dwell;
Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!</p> |
| <p>3 Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth.
Risen with healing in his wings,
Light and life to all he brings,
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!</p> | |

THE DISMISSAL

Priest Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

CLOSING VOLUNTARY

Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella

Traditional French carol
arr. Keith Chapman (1945–1989)

Welcome to Christ Church Cathedral



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The Rt. Rev. Kathryn M. Ryan, *Bishop Suffragan*
The Rt. Rev. Hector Monterroso, *Assistant Bishop*
The Very Rev. Nathaniel Katz, *Dean*
The Rev. Canon Simón Bautista Betances
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The Rev. Elizabeth Parker, *Assisting Priest*
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