# The Nativity of our Lord

December 21, 22, 23, and 24, 2020



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

(Established 1836) Flat Rock, North Carolina

## Welcome and Reminders

It is a gift to be together for Christmas and to be able to worship in our church with you. We welcome you warmly at this most holy time of year and invite you to share in our songs, prayers, and eucharistic feast. All are invited to come forward to receive Communion or a special blessing at that time. If you are already baptized, you may receive the Sacrament of Christ's body. If you have not been baptized, then we still invite you to come forward for a moment of prayer and blessing, and we would be glad to speak with you about being baptized. Again, welcome!

# **COVID-19 Safety Reminders**

Because of COVID-19 public health concerns, we have a few safety reminders for you.

- If you find out that you have COVID-19 and that you might have brought it to this service, please call our rector, Fr. Josh Stephens, at 828-808-5044 so we can let others know to take caution.
- Please wear your mask during the service. Make sure your nose is covered also. You may lift up your mask at the altar rail to consume Communion.
- You will find hand-sanitizer in the pews and with the ushers. Please use it before receiving Communion.
- We invite you to sing at this service but please refrain from belting out hymns as we would prefer. Singing softly and with normal breathing is encouraged.

Our Christmas loose offering and designated checks have been designated for Interfaith Assistance Ministry. Please give generously to this important local ministry.

# WELCOME TO THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

#### THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

Festival Eucharist, Rite II Book of Common Prayer, page 355

What Child Is This?

Bring A Torch, Jeanette, Isabella

I Wonder As I Wander

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

Joy to the World!

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: REFRAIN: O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heaven above; glory to God, glory in the highest: REFRAIN

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be glory given; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: REFRAIN

The people standing, the Celebrant says

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

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

People 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

The Celebrant says to the people

The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** 

or this

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, in glory everlasting. Amen.

or this

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born [this day] of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

## THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

#### The Lessons

The people are seated for the lessons

First Lesson: 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.

The people stand

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by; Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light; The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight. For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above, While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love. O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth! And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

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!

## The people are seated

#### Psalm 96

1 Sing to the Lord a new song; \* sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.

2 Sing to the Lord and bless his Name; \* proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.

3 Declare his glory among the nations \* and his wonders among all peoples.

4 For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; \* he is more to be feared than all gods.

5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; \* but it is the Lord who made the heavens.

6 Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence! \* Oh, the power and the splendor of his sanctuary!

7 Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; \* ascribe to the Lord honor and power.

8 Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his Name; \* bring offerings and come into his courts.

9 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; \* let the whole earth tremble before him.

10 Tell it out among the nations: "The Lord is King! \* he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity."

Il Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; \* let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

12 Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord when he comes, \* when he comes to judge the earth.

13 He will judge the world with righteousness \* and the peoples with his truth.

The people stand

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.

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.

The people are seated

Second Lesson: Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Reader The Word of the Lord People Thanks be to God.

The people stand.

GRADUAL HYMN: No. 87 Hark! the Herald Angels Sing.......Mendelssohn

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!
REFRAIN: Hark! the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King!

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord; Late in time behold him come, off-spring of the Virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate Deity. Pleased as man with us to dwell; Jesus, our Emmanuel! REFRAIN

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! REFRAIN Then, as all remain standing, the Deacon reads the Gospel

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

## The Gospel: Luke 2:1-14, 15-20

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!"

[When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

After the Gospel, the Deacon says

The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon Fr. Josh Stephens

All stand

## The Nicene Creed

People 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 Peace

All stand. The Celebrant says to the people

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People

And also with you.

Then the Ministers and People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

# The Offertory

The Rector will offer instructions for receiving Communion and an Offertory Sentence.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Sing Noel! Jesus Is Born! Dale Peterson

Sing Noel! Jesus is Born! text by Dale Peterson

Come join us in singing this wonderful song, Sing noel, Jesus is born! Join us in singing all season long. Sing noel, Jesus is born,

O come ye people who seek the true light. Sing noel, Jesus is born! Join as we sing of that Bethlehem night. Sing noel, Jesus is born!

Angels is song, shepherds in fright, wisemen began their journey that night; follow the star to that stable of hay. Could the King of all kings be born in this way?

### Torches

translated by J. B. Trend (from the Galician)

Torches, torches, run with torches all the way to Bethlehem! Christ is born and now lies sleeping; come and sing your song to him!

Ah, Roro, Roro, my baby, Ah, Roro, my love, Roro; Sleep you will, my heart's own darling, while we sing you our Roro.

Sing my friends, and make you merry, joy and mirth and joy again; Lo, he lives, the King of heaven, now and evermore. Amen.

## All stand

OFFERTORY RESPONSE: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.......Old 100<sup>th</sup> Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

# The Great Thanksgiving Eucharistic Prayer D

The people remain standing. The Celebrant faces them and says

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.

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

It is truly right to glorify you, Father, and to give you thanks; for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and for ever.

Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance.

Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we sing (say),

People

Holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The people stand or kneel.

Then the Celebrant continues

We acclaim you, holy Lord, glorious in power. Your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love. You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might rule and serve all your creatures. When our disobedience took us far from you, you did not abandon us to the power of death. In your mercy you came to our help, so that in seeking you we might find you. Again and again you called us into covenant with you, and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation.

Father, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, he lived as one of us, yet without sin. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. To fulfill your purpose he gave himself up to death; and, rising from the grave, destroyed death, and made the whole creation new.

And, that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and rose for us, he sent the Holy Spirit, his own first gift for those who believe, to complete his work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it, and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.

When the hour had come for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end; at supper with them he 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."

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand, awaiting his coming in glory; and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you.

Celebrant and People

We praise you, we bless you, we give thanks to you, and we pray to you, Lord our God.

The Celebrant continues

Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us, and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name.

Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic Church, redeemed by the blood of your Christ. Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace.

Remember José, our Bishop; Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury; and Francis, Bishop of Rome; and all who minister in your Church.

Remember all your people, and those who seek your truth.

Remember Vanessa, Joanne, Betsy, Helen, Patty, Toby, Amy, Deanna, Grace, and Ethan, Donald, Christine, Joe, and Donna, Susie, Rosie, Beth, Erin, Tom, Carolyn, Ryan, Ernie and Paula, Theresa, Becky and Delmas, Paula, Robbie, Jane, Pete, Cecilia, and Lori.

Remember all who have died in the peace of Christ, and those whose faith is known to you alone; bring them into the place of eternal joy and light.

And grant that we may find our inheritance with the Blessed Virgin Mary, with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with St. John and all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **AMEN**. And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People

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

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread.

A period of silence is kept.

The Celebrant continues

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:

People

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

Facing the people, the Celebrant says the following Invitation

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.

Please come forward at the direction of the ushers. Gluten-free wafers are available on request. If you need Communion brought to you, please let an usher know.

## The Communion of the Faithful

COMMUNION ANTHEM: Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly ......Robert Powell (written in honor of the Rev. H. Alexander Viola)

Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly text by Ronald Palmer

Sing of Mary, pure and lowly, Virgin Mother undefiled. Sing of God's own Son most holy, who became her little child. Fairest child of fairest Mother, God the Lord who came to earth, Word mad flesh, our very brother, takes our nature by his birth.

Sing of Jesus, son of Mary, in the home at Nazareth.

Toil and labor cannot weary Love enduring unto death.

Constant was the love he gave her, though he went forth from her side, forth to preach, and heal, and suffer, till on Calvary he died.

Glory be to God the Father, Glory be to God the Son; Glory be to God the Spirit; Glory to the Three in One. From the heart of blessed Mary, from all saints the song ascends, and the Church the strain reechoes unto earth's remotest end.

# Post Communion Prayer

Celebrant & People 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.

The people kneel or stand as the light of Christ is shared. Please keep candles vertical to prevent wax spillage.

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.

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

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 Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of his holiness. **Amen.** 

May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel. Amen.

May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor. Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen**.

All stand

And the mountains in reply echoing their brave delight.

REFRAIN: Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why these songs of happy cheer? What great brightness did you see? What glad tidings did you hear? REFRAIN

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing; Come adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King. REFRAIN

## The Dismissal

Deacon Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People Thanks be to God.

### THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

PO Box 185, 1905 Greenville Highway, Flat Rock, NC 28731 828-693-9783

Website: www.stjohnflatrock.org Worship Services 8:45 & 11:00am

Children's Sunday School: 10:00am (during school year only)/Adult Sunday School: 10:00am

Holy Eucharist & Healing Service – Wednesdays 10:30am in the Parish Hall Office Hours- 8:30am-3:30pm M-F

In case of pastoral emergencies:

Father Josh Stephens 828-808-5044 Deacon Sandy Rex 847-507-7212

The Rt. Rev. José McLoughlin, Bishop

The Rev. Josh Stephens, Rector: rector@stjohnflatrock.org

The Rev. Deacon Sandy Rex, Deacon: cwrexiii@rmimidwest.com

Dewitt Tipton, Organist/Director of Music: dewitt.tipton@furman.edu

Diana Byrd, Youth and Families Coordinator: byrddd@gmail.com

Leslie Stott, Parish Office Administrator: officeadmin@stjohnflatrock.org

Tracie Lutz, Administrative Assistant for Finance: aafinance@stjohnflatrock.org

Kevin Hunt, Sexton: sexton@stjohnflatrock.org

#### **VESTRY MEMBERS**

Senior Warden: Carol Rector Junior Warden: Jerry Tanner

#### 2020

Elizabeth Christenbury Greg Newbold Carol Rector Michael Shannon

2021

Jerry Tanner Cynthia Easterling Janet Johnson Shelley Schiro

2022

Terry Enslen Marie Hyder Gibson Sims Dick Zecher

#### PARISH OFFICERS

Margaret Barker, Clerk of the Vestry Tom Griswold, Treasurer

#### STANDING COMMITTEES

Buildings and Grounds Committee: Robin Howe

By Laws, Canons & Insurance: Jim Olson Christian Formation: Mary Anne Inglis Communications & Publicity: Joey Popp

Finance: Jodi Sundeen

Historic Churchyard Committee: Ken Jones

New Member Ministry: Brenda Hillyer, Judy Petersen

Outreach: Carol Rector

Personnel: Margaret Barker

Stewardship: David Christenbury

#### OTHER COMMITTEES AND MINISTRIES

Acolytes: Lynn Savage

Altar Guild: Sandra Jeffery, Marti Smith

Chefs of St. John: Jim Vint

Churchyard Trustees: Pete Petersen

Docents: Albert Gooch

**Endowment Trustees:** Tom Griswold

Episcopal Church Women (ECW): Kathy Newbold

Eucharistic Visitors: Dick Zecher

Flower Guild: Bay Chamberlain

Flower Memorials: Gaston Motes

Funeral Reception Ministry: Brenda Hillyer

Garden Guild: Jerry & Jan Tanner

Gatekeepers: Dick Zecher

Greeters: Betsy Tibbs

Heritage, Archives & Gift Committee: John Barker

Lay Readers: Susan MacDonald

Meal Ministry: Kathy Newbold

Needle Work Ministry: Judy Petersen

Newsletter Editor: Leslie Stott

Ushers: Clint Adams, Bettie Orr

Wedding Coordinator: Elaine Howe