

The Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

December 24, 2025

5:00 & 10:30pm



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

Est. 1836 | Flat Rock, North Carolina

Mission Statement

To know and love God as He is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, to bring others to His saving love, and to serve the world in His name.

Welcome to St. John in the Wilderness

We welcome you warmly to St. John in the Wilderness and invite you to share in our songs, prayers, and eucharistic feast. If you do not have a church family at this time, then we invite you to join in this fellowship of faith as we share life together as the Body of Christ. See the note to our visitors on the back inside cover for more information about receiving Communion and joining the church.

Reminders for Worship

- Children of all ages are most welcome in worship, and during the service they may enjoy the activity bags, which are in the Tower Entrance. There is no nursery care during worship on December 24, 25, or 28. The nursery will reopen on January 4.
- Formation is available for children, youth, and adults most Sundays from 10:10 to 10:45am in our Parish House complex across Rutledge Drive.
- Please participate in the service by singing and praying with us. At the time of the Peace, please take a few moments to leave your pew and greet others in the name of our Lord.
- A restroom is available near the front of the church and can be accessed through an exterior door. Please see an usher for directions.
- You will find hand sanitizer in the pews and with the ushers. Please use it after the Peace and before receiving Communion.

Special Christmas Offering

Our Special Christmas Offering has been designated to support La Capilla de Santa Maria, a Latino Episcopal mission parish on the edge of Hendersonville that dates back 35 years. It is a vibrant community with many wonderful ministries and activities. All the cash collected during our Christmas services, as well as checks and online donations with "Christmas Offering" in the memo, will be sent as a surprise Christmas gift to our dear siblings in Christ at La Capilla.

You may give online at stjohnflatrock.org/donate, or by scanning the QR code to the right with your mobile device camera.



O Come, Let Us Adore Him

Celebrate the Season with St. John in the Wilderness

CHRISTMAS EVE | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

Festival Eucharist, Rite II
5:00 and 10:30pm in the Church

No nursery care available. Children are always welcome in worship!

CHRISTMAS DAY | THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25

Holy Eucharist, Rite II
11:00am in the Church

No nursery care available. Children are always welcome in worship!

The Parish Office will be closed Wednesday, December 24 through Friday, January 2. We will open again on Monday, January 5!

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS | DECEMBER 28

Holy Eucharist, Rite II
10:00am in the Church

Christmas Potluck Feast
5:00pm in the Wilderness Room



Join us for a chance to enjoy good food and great company as we continue the spirit of the season together. Whether the holidays have been busy, quiet, or somewhere in between, we'd love for you to join us in celebrating the love of Christ that continues to shine brightly this season and always. Bring a dish to share if you can, but most importantly, bring yourself.

*There's always a seat at the table for you. **Please RSVP by scanning the QR code** or at bit.ly/SJWxmaspotluck2025.*

All end-of-year giving must be received by the Parish Office no later than December

31. You may donate by placing gifts in the offering plates during services, online at www.stjohnflatrock.org/donate, or by mailing gifts to PO Box 185, Flat Rock, NC 28731.

Thank you for giving so generously to God's work at St. John in the Wilderness in 2025!

TWELFTH NIGHT | MONDAY, JANUARY 5

Burning of the Greens and Other Revelry

4:00-6:00pm at Camp Kanuga

120 Camp Kanuga Circle, Hendersonville, NC 28739

Bring Christmas trees and other greens to burn! St. John will provide food and beverages as we gather around the fire to sing songs and celebrate the last night of Christmas. No RSVP necessary.

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD | TUESDAY, JANUARY 6

Epiphany Eucharist & Potluck Feast

5:30-7:30pm at the Church of the Transfiguration, Saluda

20 Episcopal Church Drive, Saluda, NC 28773



*Join us for a Eucharist and potluck celebrating the ancient feast of the Epiphany with the arrival of the Magi to venerate the Christ child, the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee, and the Baptism of our Lord. This will be a wonderful gathering of Episcopalians, Lutherans, and friends from Saluda, Tryon, Bat Cave, Hendersonville, Brevard, Mills River, Fletcher, Edneyville, and Flat Rock at the Church of the Transfiguration in Saluda. **Please register at bit.ly/deaneryepiphany2026 or by scanning the QR code.***

Festival Eucharist, Rite II

5:00 & 10:30pm

PRELUDE: Organ Settings of Carols

Holy Infant's Lullaby

Norman Dello Joio

Lucy Owen Hoyt, soprano

Sleep, sleep. O, rest you, holy infant, close your eyes to the star shining bright.

Sleep in the arms of your mother who sings to you through the night.

Sleep, sleep. O, rest you, holy infant, close your eyes to the star shining bright.

A la ru, a la me, a la ru, a la me, A la ru, a la me, a la ru, a la ru, a la me.

Sleep, sleep. The angels sing praises in heaven while Mary sings lullaby loo.

Dream of a day, gentle baby, when man learns love from you.

A la ru, a la me, a la ru, a la me, A la ru, a la me, a la ru, a la ru, a la me.

ENTRANCE HYMN: No. 83 O come, all ye faithful

Adeste fidelis

Verses 1, 2, 3, and 6

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
2 God from God, Light from Light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,

1 come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
2 lo! he ab - hors not the Vir - gin's womb;
3 sing, all ye ci - ti - zens of heaven a - bove;

1 come, and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;
 2 on - ly - be - got - ten Son of the Fa - ther;
 3 glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est;

Refrain

O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a -
 dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord.

6 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 WORD OF GOD

Acclamation & Response

BCP p. 355

The people standing, the Celebrant says

Alleluia! To us a child is born.

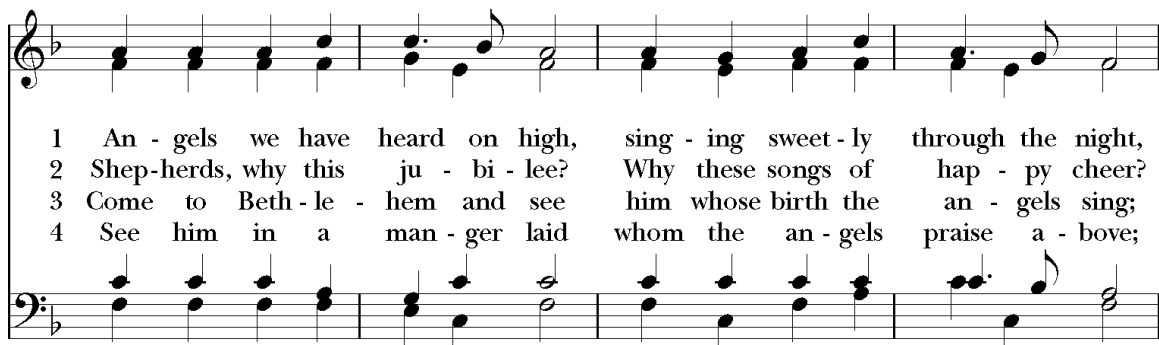
People

Come let us adore him. Alleluia!

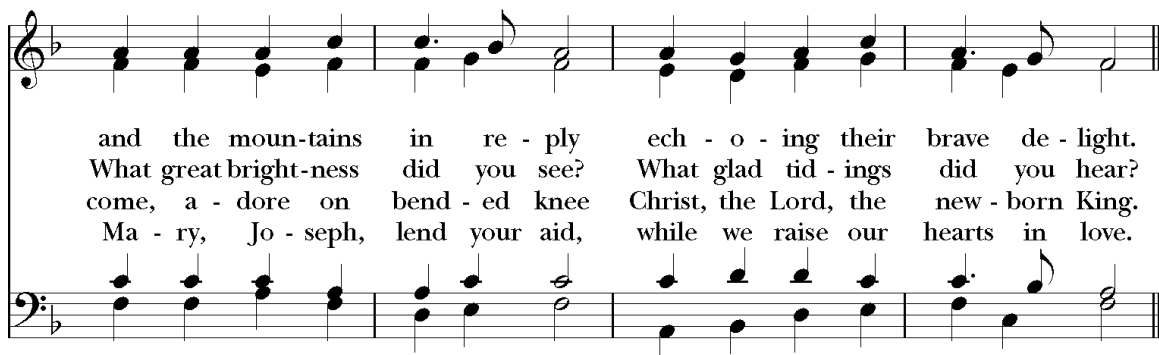
Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GLORIA: No. 96 Angels we have heard on high

Gloria



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sing - ing sweet - ly through the night,
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why these songs of hap - py cheer?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;
4 See him in a man - ger laid whom the an - gels praise a - bove;



and the moun-tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their brave de - light.
What great bright-ness did you see? What glad tid - ings did you hear?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.
Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love.



Refrain

Glo - - - - - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - - - -

- - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

The Celebrant says to the people

The Lord be with you.

People

And also with you.

Celebrant

Let us pray.

The Collect of the Day

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.

The people are seated.

First Lesson: Isaiah 9:2-7

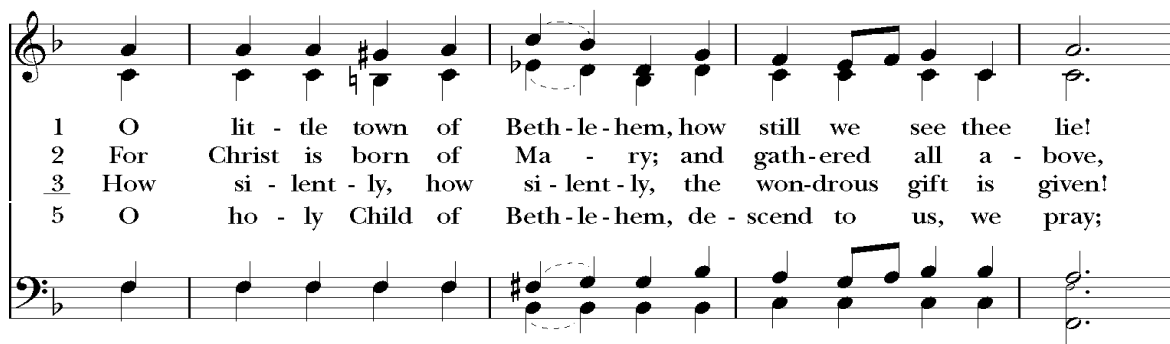
The people who walked in darkness
 have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness--
 on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,
 as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their 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.

The Word of the Lord.

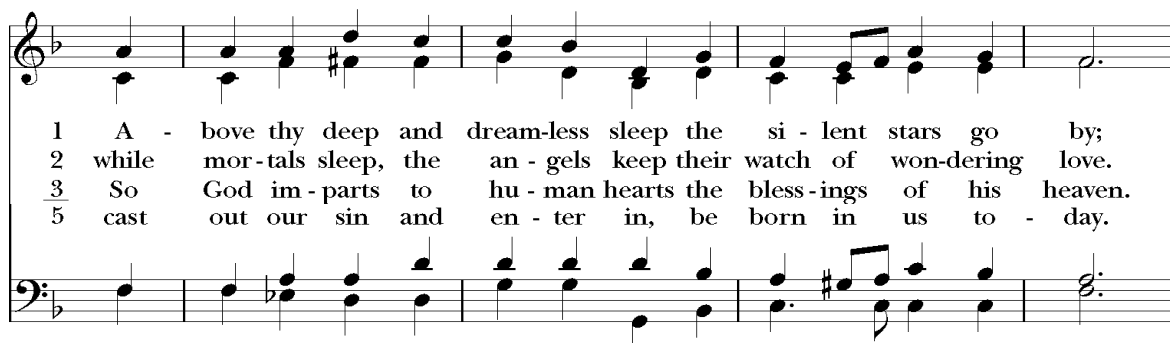
People **Thanks be to God.**

The people stand.

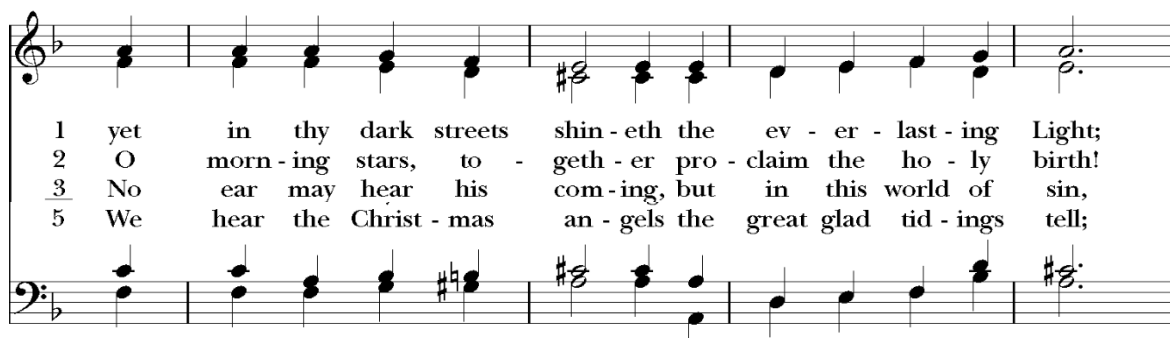
Verses 1, 2, 3 and 5



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Ma - ry; and gath - ered all a - bove,
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!
 5 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



1 A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
 2 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.
 3 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven.
 5 cast out our sin and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



1 yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;
 2 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!
 3 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,
 5 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



1 the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 2 and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.
 3 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
 5 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

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.

The Word of the Lord.

People

Thanks be to God.

As the music begins, all stand for the gradual hymn and reorient themselves to the Gospel of our Lord as it is processed into the congregation.


GRADUAL HYMN: No. 102 Once in royal David's city

Irby


Verses 1-3




1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's ci - ty stood a
 2 He came down to earth from hea - ven, who is
*3 We, like Ma - ry, rest con - found - ed that a



1 low - ly cat - tle shed, where a mo - ther laid her
 2 God and Lord of all, and his shel - ter was a
3 sta - ble should dis - play hea - ven's Word, the world's cre -



1 ba - by in a man - ger for his bed: Ma - ry
 2 sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall; with the
3 a - tor, cra - dled there on Christ - mas Day, yet this



1 was that mo - ther mild, — Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child. —
 2 poor, the scorned, the low - ly, lived on earth our Sa - vior ho - ly.
3 child, our Lord and bro - ther, brought us love for one an - oth - er.

All remain standing as the Deacon or a Priest reads the Gospel, first saying

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

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

The Gospel: Luke 2:1-20

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

The Sermon

The Rev. Josh Stephens

After the sermon, there is a brief moment of silence. When the Celebrant rises, the congregation stands.

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. The Leader begins

During this Christmastide, let us pray for the Church and for the world as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, saying, “Lord, hear our prayer.”

For the holy Church of God – for all Christians gathered to celebrate the nativity of our Lord – that we may make room for God in our hearts, homes, and neighborhoods, we pray to you, O Lord.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader For Sean, our Presiding Bishop, for José, our bishop, for all bishops and other ministers, and for all the holy people of God, we pray to you, O Lord.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness we may share the Good News of God’s incarnation with joy and love to the ends of the earth, we pray to you, O Lord.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader For this fragile and beautiful earth that sustains us: that your grace and goodness may speak to us through stars and mountains, frost and snow, trees and waters. And help us to be faithful stewards of your Creation, we pray to you, O Lord.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader For the peace of the world: We ask the Prince of Peace to rule in our hearts during Christmastide and we pray for people and communities near and far where warfare and violence have caused so much pain and loss. We pray to you, O Lord.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader We offer thanks and prayers for our friends and family at this time. We also pray for our enemies and those who wish us harm. Redeem all our relationships through your grace, we pray to you, O Lord.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader For those who, like the shepherds, work while others sleep, and for all those whose labors make our lives possible, we pray to you, O Lord.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray to you, O Lord.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader For this congregation, for those who are present and those who are absent, that we may be delivered from hardness of heart and show forth your glory in all that we do, we pray to you, O Lord.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader For all who have commended themselves to our prayers; that being freed from anxiety, they may live in joy, peace, and health. We pray especially for Patricia, Judy, Cheryl, Patrick, Susan, Jack, Jim, Ginger, Bob, Betsy, Chuck, Cindy, Chris, Gena, Dorinda, Tawana, Carla, Jeff, Julie, Betsy, Matthew, Anne, Anthony, Robert, Legare, and Elijah. Are there others?

The people may include the names of those for whom they are praying either silently or aloud.

We pray to you, O Lord.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader For all who have died in the communion of your Church, [*especially* ____], and those whose faith is known to you alone. We also remember our loved ones whose absence is felt deeply at Christmas and we pray for all who are grieving. In the fullness of your time, bring us with all the saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom; we pray to you, O Lord.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

The Celebrant offers a concluding Collect.

The Peace

BCP p. 332

All stand. The Celebrant says to the people

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

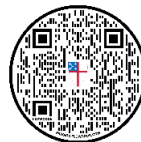
Then the Ministers and People may greet one another in the name of the Lord. The Celebrant then shares an offertory sentence.

Welcome & Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Offertory

The ushers pass the offering plates and present the gifts of the congregation at the Lord's table. Our special Christmas offering will go to support La Capilla de Santa Maria, a local Latino Episcopal mission parish. See the front inside cover of the bulletin for instructions. Online gifts may be made using the QR code to the right, making sure to note "Christmas Offering" in the comment box.



OFFERTORY MUSIC: 5:00 Psallite (Now We Sing)

Michael Praetorius

English translation by Norman Greyson

*Latin: Psallite, unigenito, Christo Dei Filio.
Redemptori Domino puerulo jacenti, in praesepio.*

Translation: Now we sing! All in one accord, to the Son of God, our Lord.
On this day is born to us our Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ, our King.

*German: Ein Kleines Kindelein liegt in dem Krippe lien.
Alle liebe Engelein dienen dem Kindelein, und singen ihm fein.*

Translation: Come see the Heavenly Child, so gentle meek and mild.
Lowly in a manger laid, how sweet the little Babe, Jesus Christ, our King.

10:30 Gentle Mary

Lewis M. Kirby

Lucy Owen Hoyt, soprano

Text by Joseph Simpson Cook

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger; There He lay, the undefiled, to the world a stranger.
Such a babe in such a place, can He be the Saviour? Ask the saved of all the race who have found His favor.

Angels sang about His birth; wise men sought and found Him;
Heaven's star shone brightly forth, glory all around Him.
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, heard the angels singing;
All the plains were lit that night, all the hills were ringing.

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger; He is still the undefiled, but no more a stranger.
Son of God, of humble birth, beautiful the story; Praise His name in all the earth, Hail the King of Glory!

Unison or harmony

5 To God the Fa - ther, heaven - ly Light, to Christ, re -

5 vealed in earth - ly night, to God the Ho - ly

5 Ghost we raise our e - qual and un - ceas - ing praise.

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer B, BCP p. 367

The people remain standing. The Celebrant faces them and sings

Celebrant *People*

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Here a Proper Preface is sung or said on all Sundays, and on other occasions as appointed.

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:

SANCTUS

Hymnal S-125

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The people stand or kneel.

Then the Celebrant continues

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.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or to 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.

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,

Celebrant and People

**We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;**

The Celebrant continues

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 [_____ and] all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; 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, Almighty Father, now and for 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.
and may add Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

The ushers immediately begin releasing the congregation to share in the Eucharistic feast. A gluten-free option is available upon request. For further instructions about Holy Communion, see the note to our visitors on the back inside cover of the bulletin.

The choir often begins by sharing a musical offering while the congregation receives the Sacrament. Following the choir's musical offering, please join in as we sing the Communion Hymn together.

COMMUNION SOLO (5:00): O Prince of Peace

David W. Music

Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith

O Prince of peace whose promised birth the angels sang with "Peace on earth,"
Peace be to us and all beside, peace to us all, peace to the world this Christmastide.

O child who found to lay your head no place but in a manger bed,
Come where our doors stand open wide, peace to us all, peace to the world,
peace in our homes this Christmastide.

O Christ whom shepherds came to find, their joy be ours in heart and mind;
Let grief and care be laid aside, peace to us all, peace to the world,
peace in our homes, peace in our hearts this Christmastide.

O Savior Christ, ascended Lord, our risen Prince of life restored,
our Love who once for sinners died, peace to us all, peace to the world,
peace in our homes, peace in our hearts, peace with our God this Christmastide.

COMMUNION HYMN: No. 89 It came upon the midnight clear

Carol

1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that
 2 Still through the clov - en skies they come with
 3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife the
 4 For lo! the days are haste - ning on, by

glo - rious song of old, from an - gels bend - ing
 peace - ful wings un - furled, and still their heaven - ly
 world has suf - fered long; be - neath the heaven - ly
 pro - phets seen of old, when with the ev - er -

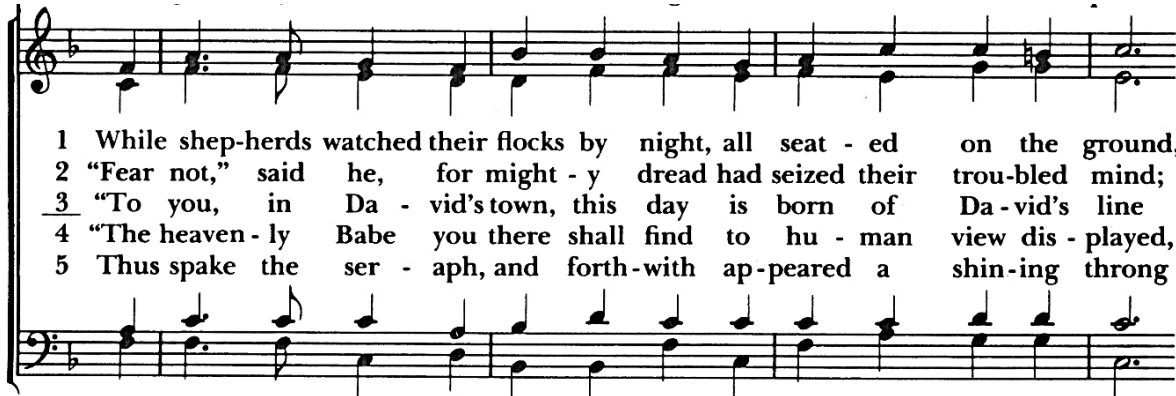
near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
 mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world;
 hymn have rolled two thou - sand years of wrong;
 cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,

“Peace on the earth, good will to men, from
 a - bove its sad and low - ly plains they
 and war - ring hu - man - kind hears not the
 when peace shall o - ver all the earth its

heaven's all - gra - cious King.” The world in sol - emn
 bend on hov - ering wing, and ev - er o'er its
 tid - ings which they bring; O hush the noise and
 an - cient splen - dors fling, and all the world give

still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
 Ba - bel - sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
 cease your strife and hear the an - gels sing!
 back the song which now the an - gels sing.

COMMUNION HYMN: No. 94 While shepherds watched their flocks by night *Winchester Old*



1 While shep-herds watched their flocks by night, all seat - ed on the ground,
2 "Fear not," said he, for might - y dread had seized their trou-bled mind;
3 "To you, in Da - vid's town, this day is born of Da - vid's line
4 "The heaven - ly Babe you there shall find to hu - man view dis - played,
5 Thus spake the ser - aph, and forth-with ap-peared a shin-ing throng



1 the an - gel of the Lord came down, and glo - ry shone a - round.
2 "Glad tid - ings of great joy I bring to you and all man-kind.
3 the Sa - vior, who is Christ the Lord; and this shall be the sign:
4 all mean - ly wrapped in swath-ing bands, and in a man-ger laid."
5 of an - gels prais - ing God, who thus ad - dressed their joy - ful song:

6 "All glory be to God on high
and on the earth be peace;
good will henceforth from heaven to men
begin and never cease."

Alternative tune: *Hampton*, 95.

Words: Nahum Tate (1625-1715)

Music: *Winchester Old*, melody from *The Whole Booke of Psalmes*, 1592; harm. *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 1922; desc. Craig Sellar Lang (1891-1971)

♩ = 80
CM

COMMUNION HYMN: No. 84 Love came down at Christmas*Gartan*

1 Love came down at Christ - mas, love all love - ly, love di - vine;
2 Wor - ship we the God - head, love in - car - nate, love di - vine;
3 Love shall be our to - ken; love be yours and love be mine,

love was born at Christ - mas: star and an - gels gave the sign.
wor - ship we our Je - sus, but where-with for sa - cred sign?
love to God and neigh - bor, love for plea and gift and sign.

The musical score is written for three voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor) and piano accompaniment. It features a treble and bass staff for the piano, and three staves for the voices. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a focus on the lyrics.

COMMUNION ANTHEM: O Holy Night*Adolphe Adam*

Lucy Owen Hoyt, soprano

Translator: John Sullivan Dwight

Author: Placide Cappeau (1847)

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining; it is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining, till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born! O night divine! O night, O night divine!

Truly He taught us to love one another; His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother, and in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we, let all within us praise His holy name.
Christ is the Lord! O praise His name forever!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim! His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!

The people stand as "Silent Night" begins and the light of Christ is shared. Please join us in sharing the light of Christ with each other

BENEDICTION HYMN: No. 111 Silent night, holy night

Stille Nacht

Si - lent night, ho - ly night, all is calm,
Si - lent night, ho - ly night, shep - herds quake
Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God,

all is bright round yon vir - gin mo - ther and child.
at the sight, glo - ries stream from hea - ven a - far,
love's pure light ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face,

Ho - ly in - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in hea - ven - ly
heaven - ly hosts sing al - le - lu - ia; Christ, the Sa - vior, is
with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy

peace. born! birth. Sleep Christ, in hea - ven - ly peace.
Je - sus, the Sa - vior, is born! birth. Lord, at thy birth.

After Communion, the Celebrant says

Let us pray.

The people stand or kneel for the Post-Communion Prayer.

Celebrant and 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 Bishop when present, or the Priest, gives the blessing.

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

DISMISSAL HYMN: No. 87 Hark! the herald angels sing

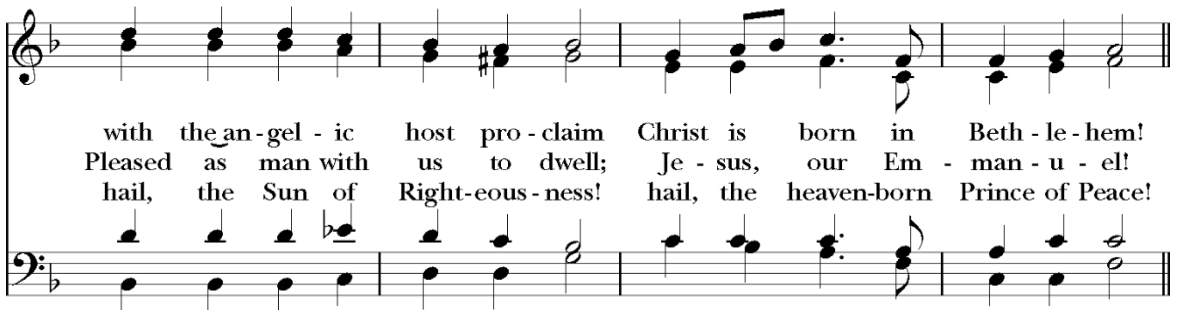
Mendelssohn

1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing glo - ry to the new - born King!
 2 Christ, by high - est heav - en a - dored; Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord;
 3 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!
 late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb.
 born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, join the tri-umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God - head see; hail the in-car - nate De - i - ty.
 Risen with heal-ing in his wings, light and life to all he brings,



with the an-gel - ic host pro - claim Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!
 Pleased as man with us to dwell; Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!
 hail, the Sun of Right-eous - ness! hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!

Refrain



Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing glo - ry to the new - born King!

The Dismissal

The Deacon, or the Celebrant, may dismiss the people with these words

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: In dulci jubilo

Johann S. Bach

ALTAR FLOWERS

Given in memory of the Dethero Family
by David Dethero

Given in memory of Charles Lee Orr
by Bettie Orr

Given in memory of
Wendell, Mom, Dad, & Harry
by Carol Rector

Given in memory of Gene Staton
by Debby Staton

Given in memory of Bill Gordon
by Worth Gordon

Given in memory of our families
by Robert and Joan Broyles Odean

Given in memory of Loretta Orentas
by Rita Antonelli

Given in memory of
Bill and Ann Trotter
and
Robert and Eleanor Waterfill
by Will and Dorothy Trotter

Given in memory of beloved husband,
father, and grandfather
Daniel Samples
by Doug and Karen Olson and family

Given in memory of
Caleb James Hoffman
by Missy Izard

Given in memory of Michael Covell
by Joanie Covell

Given in memory of
Tom Darnall and my family
by Betsy Darnall

Given in loving memory of
Sandy and Ginny MacNeil
*Given by their daughters
Leslie Dobbins & Ginger White*

Given in memory of
M. Madison Slusher, MD
by Katy Brown and the Slusher Family

Given in memory of
Albert Moreno & Sarah (Pepper) Moreno
by Maria Johnson

Given in memory of loved ones
by David and Elizabeth Christenbury

Given in memory of Tom Sherman
by Lynne and Larry Miller

Given in memory of
our parents and sisters
by Jonathan & Shannon Duvall

Given in honor of loved ones
by Bill & Laurie Morris

The Prayers of the People is that part of our liturgy which offers intercessions and thanksgivings to God. **Worshippers, wherever they are in the church, are encouraged to offer aloud or silently their own such prayers during the appropriate part of the Prayers of the People.** As we pray, please remember those who are ill or with other needs: Patricia Haire, Judy Oldenburg, Cheryl Cohen, Patrick Necessary, Susan Rex, Jack, Jim Gibbs, Ginger Quarles, Bob Sundeen, Betsy Thagard, Chuck King, Cindy Brinkmann, Chris Smith, Gena Gross, Dorinda Burnett, Tawana Gibbs, Carla Poe, Jeff, Julie Bleimann, Betsy Darnall, Matthew Kennedy, Anne Vogler, Anthony Dionisio, Robert Odean, Legare Head, and Elijah Stephens.

Eucharistic Visitors share the Body and Blood of Christ with those who receive care from our Visitor Ministry. We thank God for the ministry of Clint Adams, Stephen Askew, Patricia Tanzer Askew, Art Mack, Judy Petersen, Anita Reid, Stan Rogan, and Bill Taylor.

To Our Visitors: We welcome you with all our hearts! You are also invited to come forward at the time of Communion to receive the Sacrament or a blessing. All baptized Christians are encouraged to receive Communion, including infants and children. To receive Communion, simply come forward to kneel at the altar if you are able. Put one hand in the palm of the other and the Celebrant will share the Body of Christ with you. You may then intinct or drink from the Chalice. A gluten-free option is available upon request. If you are not baptized, please come forward and kneel at the altar while crossing your arms over your chest to receive a special blessing, and we invite you to talk to the priest at any time about entering discernment for being baptized. Won't you join with Christ and his Church on this journey of faith?

If you do not have a church home at this time, then we hope you will make St. John in the Wilderness your church family. We find that through sharing life together as the Body of Christ, we are made whole and renewed daily. Talk to an usher or member of the clergy about joining this parish, or you are welcome to simply fill out a card in your pew and put it in the offering plate. We welcome you!

THANK YOU FOR SERVING IN WORSHIP

| | Christmas Eve December 24 | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | 5:00pm | 10:30pm |
| Lay Readers | Bill Taylor | Bob Inglis |
| Acolytes | Laura Teel | Beau Singletary |
| Ushers | George Grzenda D. Christenbury | Debby Staton Clint Adams |
| Greeters | Annabelle Hurd Cathryn Harrell | Carmen & Ned Curtis |
| Cart Drivers | John Knapp | |
| Videography <i>(Service)</i> | BJ McKee | N/A |
| Videography <i>(Formation)</i> | N/A | |
| Altar Guild | Kathy Newbold Carolyn Franz | Laurie Morris |
| Flower Guild | SJW Flower Guild & Friends | |
| Opening Gatekeeper | N/A | |
| Closing Gatekeeper | N/A | |

| | Christmas Day December 25 11:00am | The First Sunday after Christmas December 28 10:00am |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Lay Readers | Lori Griswold | Candace Lewis |
| Acolytes | Arlo Stephens | Danielle Pharr |
| Ushers | Bettie Orr Kip Shearon | Ned Curtis Clint Adams |
| Greeters | Worth Gordon | Worth Gordon Carmen Curtis |
| Cart Drivers | Jill Owen | Danielle Pharr |
| Videography <i>(Service)</i> | David Burge | Tom Griswold |
| Videography <i>(Formation)</i> | N/A | N/A |
| Altar Guild | Cathryn Harrell | Sandra Jeffery Lynne Miller Michael Jeffery <i>(Brass)</i> |
| Flower Guild | SJW Flower Guild & Friends | |
| Opening Gatekeeper | N/A | BJ McKee & George Grzenda |
| Closing Gatekeeper | N/A | Sandy Skelton |



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

Church: 1895 Greenville Highway | Office: 1905 Greenville Highway

Mailing: PO Box 185, Flat Rock, NC 28731

828-693-9783 | www.stjohnflatrock.org

In the case of a pastoral emergency, call the Parish Office and dial 5.

Worship Services: 8:45 & 11:00am | Office Hours: 9:00am-4:00pm M-F

Sunday School for Adults, Youth, and Children: 10:00am

Holy Eucharist & Healing Service: Wednesdays 10:30am in the Wilderness Room

The Rt. Rev. José McLoughlin, Bishop

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

The Rev. Patricia Tanzer Askew, Priest Associate: ptaskew@gmail.com

The Rev. Stephen Askew, Priest Associate: stephenaskew@gmail.com

Ed Tompkins, Director of Music & Organist: music@stjohnflatrock.org

Mims Yeargin, Director of Parish Communication & Administration: officeadmin@stjohnflatrock.org

Stacy Knapp, Financial Administrator: finance@stjohnflatrock.org

Missy Izard, Director of Christian Education: missy@stjohnflatrock.org

Kevin Hunt, Sexton: sexton@stjohnflatrock.org

VESTRY MEMBERS

Jerry Holt, *Senior Warden*

Jim Cooper, *Junior Warden*

2025

Kim Sanders

Patrice German

Laura Teel

2026

Jill Owen

Jon Fitzpatrick

Jim Gibbs

Sandy Skelton

2027

Kitty Olson

Catherine Popp

Steve Sittnick

PARISH OFFICERS

Marlin Sanders &

Bill Williams, *Treasurers*

Kim Sanders, *Clerk*

STANDING COMMITTEES

Appointments: Carol Rector

Buildings and Grounds Committee: Jerry Tanner

By Laws, Canons & Insurance: Jim Olson

Christian Formation: Missy Izard

Communications & Publicity: Joey Popp

Finance: Gary German

Historic Churchyard Committee: Sandy Rex

New Member Ministry: Brenda Hillyer & Judy Petersen

Outreach: Jennifer Shelton

Personnel: Margaret Barker

Stewardship: Jim and Jann Cooper

OTHER COMMITTEES AND MINISTRIES

Acolytes: Laura Teel

Altar Guild: Cathryn Harrell, Laurie Morris

Chefs of St. John: Jim Vint

Churchyard Trustees: Pete Petersen

Docents: Polly Morrice & Scott Bell

Endowment Trustees: Mike Teel

Episcopal Church Women: Elizabeth Christenbury & Cava Sittnick

Flower Guild: Patrice German

Flower Memorials: Gaston Motes

Funeral Reception Ministry: Brenda Hillyer

Garden Guild: Jerry Tanner

Gatekeepers: BJ McKee

Golf Cart Ministry: Jill Owen

Good News Gardeners: Cathy & David Burge

Greeters: Worth Gordon & Carmen Curtis

Heritage, Archives & Gift Committee: John Barker

Holy Hikes-WNC: Cynthia Easterling

Lay Readers: Mark Delk

Meal Ministry: Catherine Popp

Needle Work Ministry: Judy Petersen

Sustainability: Elizabeth Christenbury

Ushers: Clint Adams & Bettie Orr

Visitor Ministry: The Revs. Stephen Askew & Patricia Tanzer Askew

Wedding Coordinator: Elaine Howe