

# THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

December 24, 2024, 4:00 pm



St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Yarmouth, ME

Prelude "Still, Still, Still" by P Manz

Call to Worship

*Intern* Joy to the world!  
*People* **The Lord has come!**

*all rise and join in singing*

Opening Carol, #83 O come, all ye faithful, vs. 1,2,3,6 *The Hymnal 1982*

Opening Acclamation

*Celebrant* Shout for joy the whole earth,  
and everything within rejoice!  
*People* **For hope has come into the world!**

*Intern* The mountains sing, the seas resound  
to the praise of your name.  
*People* **Salvation is here on earth!**

*Celebrant* The angels' song rings in the air,  
a child has been born!  
*People* **Hallelujah! The Savior of the world is here!**

Gloria, #96 Angels we have heard on high, (vs 1 & 4) *The Hymnal 1982*

The Collect of the Day

*Celebrant* God 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 this night as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes at the end of days; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

*People* **Amen.**

The Lessons

"The Birth of Jesus"—A Children's Message *Mary Curlew, Intern*

*A Telling of 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.*

**Gospel Carol, #101**

Away in the manger

*The Hymnal 1982*

**Gospel: John 1:1-14**

*The Rev. Amanda Gerken-Nelson*

*Celebrant* The Holy Gospel according to John.  
*People* **Glory to you, O God.**

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.

*Deacon* The Gospel of the Lord.  
*People* **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Homily**

*The Rev. Amanda Gerken-Nelson*

**Carol, #81**

Lo, how a rose

*The Hymnal 1982*

**Affirmation of Faith**

*Celebrant* Let us affirm our faith together.  
*People* **We believe in God,  
the creator and giver of life,**

who brought all creation to birth,  
who loves us like a parent,  
protecting, nurturing,  
and cherishing us.

We believe in Jesus Christ:  
God born among us as a fragile baby,  
embodying both love and the need for love,  
and calling us to rest in God  
as trustingly as a tiny child.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
breathed into us at our birth,  
always drawing us on to be born again,  
encouraging, exhorting, comforting,  
nourishing our growth  
and inspiring our living.

We believe in the reconciliation  
of the world to God, through Christ.  
Hunted at birth  
and humiliated at death,  
Christ entered our fearful brokenness  
so that we might enter his glorious wholeness  
and share the life of his resurrection.

And we believe that each new child  
is a glimpse of the face of God,  
a sign of the life to come,  
and a call to live in peace  
and celebrate living together.

Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to God's people on earth.  
Amen.

## Prayers of the People

*Nancy Gunzelmann*

*Leader*

Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people.

*A brief silence.*

Angels sing with praise, and shepherds run with haste. As we glorify and praise you in this place, send us into the world, proclaiming the salvation you have revealed this night. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

The seas roar, and the trees of the forest sing for joy. As creation resounds with praise, inspire us with awe, reverence, and a renewed care for all that fills the fields, skies, and seas. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

The nations declare your glory. Uphold the leaders of the earth with your justice and righteousness. Break the rod of the oppressor in every land, and bring peace where there is conflict especially Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

The holy family finds shelter around the animals' manger. Draw near to persons experiencing homelessness, those who are alone this holiday season, and all for whom this world makes no room. Wrap all your children in bands of love and mercy. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

A child is born for us and light shines on the weary. Watch over those who give birth this night and attend to those who are dying. Be present in our joys and in our sorrows. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

The heavenly host praises you. With thanksgiving for Mary, Joseph, and all your saints, sustain us in the blessed hope revealed this night. Fashion us by their example into a people zealous for good deeds, sharing your love and mercy with all. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

*Celebrant* We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

## The Peace

*Celebrant* The peace of Christ be always with you.  
*People* **And also with you.**

*The congregation is invited to share a sign of peace with those around them.*

## The Holy Communion

### Offertory Sentence

*Celebrant* "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." (Luke 2:10-12)

In response to the great joy and blessing of this babe, let us with gladness present the offerings and oblations of our life and labor to our God.

*At this time, the bread and wine are brought forward.*

### Offertory Carol, #107

Good Christian friends rejoice!

*The Hymnal 1982*

*The offering plates are brought forward*

## Offertory Prayer

*Celebrant*

Let us pray,

*People*

**Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## The Great Thanksgiving

*Celebrant*

God be with you.

*People*

**And also with you.**

*Celebrant*

Lift up your hearts.

*People*

**We lift them to our God.**

*Celebrant*

Let us give thanks to Christ our Sovereign.

*People*

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*Celebrant*

It is indeed right to give you our thanks and praise, O God,  
for your Word has become flesh among us.

Though the world did not know him,  
he bears the imprint of your very being.

Though his own people turned him away,  
in him we have seen your glory, full of grace and truth.

Therefore, with the whole realm of nature around us,  
With earth, sea, and sky,  
With the angels and archangels,  
With all the saints before us and beside us,  
we join the hymn of unending praise:

## Sanctus, *(spoken)*

*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 our God.  
Hosanna in the highest!**

## Eucharistic Prayer

*Celebrant*

Holy God, creator and giver of all life,  
from the beginning of time your Spirit breathed over the cosmos.  
You scattered stars in the heavens and raised up the mountains  
You poured out great rivers and blessed the earth with life.  
You made humankind in your image, and loved us in our weakness,  
promising to stay with us wherever we go.

In the winter of our longing, you came to the prophet Mary offering your Spirit to  
make creation whole. You gave her a child, Jesus, your beloved son to turn the  
broken world upside down.

Jesus stayed with us, healing the sick and feeding the hungry unbinding prisoners and raising the dead. He ate with strangers, showed mercy to sinners, and taught us to follow him in love without fear.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Therefore, Eternal One, of all the things that are yours we offer you these, which are yours especially. We offer them gladly, as he told us, remembering his death and resurrection, his birth in Bethlehem, and rest in the manger.

Now pour out your Spirit on this bread and wine to make them the body and blood of Christ for your waiting people. Come among us and abide with us that we may be the body of Christ for the world you love.

Shine upon us tonight as you shone upon your servant Mary, as you shine upon your people in the most troubling times and places that, lit by your love, we may raise our voices with saints and angels in a living song of praise.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, forever and forever.

**Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

*Celebrant  
People*

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen**

## The Fraction

*Celebrant* We break this bread to share in the Body of Christ.  
*People* **We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread.**

## The Invitation

*Celebrant* Come! For all is now ready. The gifts of God for the people of God.  
*People* **Thanks be to God!**

## Holy Communion

*Everyone is welcome to receive communion at St. Bart's! The ushers will invite you to come forward down the center aisle where there are two bread stations – one for each side of the sanctuary. Each station has both bread and gluten-free bread: presenting your hands facing upward indicates you'd like bread with gluten, hands facing down will indicate you'd like gluten free bread. Once you receive the bread, you may proceed to the Chalice station on your side. You are invited to sip from the chalice. If you prefer not to sip from the cup, you may place your hands across your chest to receive a blessing. If you prefer to receive neither the bread nor the wine, but would like to come forward for a blessing, please come forward as described above and simply cross your arms at your chest and the Priest or Intern will offer a blessing. Hand sanitizer is available in the aisle. Please use the side aisles to return to your seat once you have received.*

**Music at Communion**                      115 What child is this? / 78 O little town                      *The Hymnal 1982*

## Post Communion Prayer

*Intern* Let us pray. God of abundance,  
*People* **with this bread of life and cup of salvation  
you have united us with Christ,  
making us one with all your people.  
Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit,  
that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world  
and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

*Please turn on your candle.*

**Post Communion Carol, #111**    Silent Night                      *The Hymnal 1982*

## The Blessing

*Celebrant* The God of steadfastness and encouragement  
grant you to live in harmony with one another,  
in accordance with Christ Jesus.  
  
The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit  
  
*People* The God of all grace bless you now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**Closing Carol, #100**                      Joy to the world!                      *The Hymnal 1982*



**The Dismissal**

*Intern*

*People*

Arise, shine, for our Savior has come! Alleluia, alleluia!

**Thanks be to God! Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Postlude**

“Noel” by J-F Dandrieu

## SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

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**Celebrant** The Rev. Amanda Gerken-Nelson  
**Pastoral Intern** Mary Curlew  
**Music** Christina Edelen  
**Chalice Bearer** Nancy Gunzelmann  
**Crucifer** Michael Gillan  
**Ushers** Alfredo Abizini, Nick Desiderio, Jennifer Willard  
**Greeters** Leanne Greisen & Family  
**Altar Guild** Jan Burson, Linda & John Perkins  
**Flowers** Imelda Schaefer  
**A/V** Peter Sillin  
**Bread Baker** The Bread Baking Team  
**Snow Removal** Tom Hyndman

## WORSHIP RESOURCES

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Affirmation of Faith: Written by Nathan Nettleton, LaughingBird.net, 1999, incorporating some lines from "Midwife of our lives" by Kathy Galloway published in Kathy Galloway (ed.) *The Pattern of Our Days*, Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1996, p.138.

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Eucharistic Prayer: St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church, San Francisco, CA

The values that guide our Worship & Music Committee's process for creating our liturgies are inclusive, grounded, challenging, and creative. At St. Bart's, we strive to use language and imagery that is both inclusive and expansive for God and humanity.



**St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Yarmouth, ME**  
**A Congregation of The Episcopal Diocese of Maine**

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