

The Holy Friendship
of
St. James & Grace Episcopal Church

The Third Sunday of Advent
December 13, 2020 at 9:00 am



The Rev. Kim J. Litsey, Priest in Charge
The Rev. Deacon Ronald Steed
Mike LaFleur & Peter Leibert, Musicians

Join us live on Facebook: St. James Episcopal Church Preston,
Grace Episcopal Church Yantic, or on Zoom.

Stay connected on Zoom after worship for our
virtual Coffee Hour.

The Liturgy of the Word

Welcome

The Advent Candle

Reader 1: Today is the third Sunday of Advent. Advent is a time of waiting. We wait for God to send divine love and light into our dark world.

Reader 2: How does this happen?

Reader 1: God's light comes through Jesus, who became a human being just like you and me, so that he could show us the way back to God's divine love and light.

Congregation: Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us. Let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reader 1: We continue to wait for the coming of Jesus. Last Sunday, we began in the dark, and then we lit two candles. Today, on the third Sunday of Advent, we light three candles.

Reader 2: Every week in Advent, we light another candle. Each candle that we light reminds us that the Light of the World will soon come to us in the human form of the baby Jesus, the Messiah who will show us the way back to God.

Congregation: The Messiah is on the way to us. As we prepare for his coming, may we repent of our sins. May we be ready to help our Lord proclaim the good news of God's love to all people, so that the world will be filled with joy. Amen.

Opening Hymn #76 On Jordan's Bank

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

People: And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.

Celebrant: 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.**

Celebrant and People:

Hymn #56 Thomas Helmore

O come, thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home; make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Oh come thou Dayspring on high, in cheer us by thy drawing night; disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Celebrant: Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One.

People: Have mercy upon us.

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Let us pray

The Collect

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lessons

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 126

- 1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, *
then were we like those who dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, *
and our tongue with shouts of joy.
- 3 Then they said among the nations, *
"The LORD has done great things for them."
- 4 The LORD has done great things for us, *
and we are glad indeed.
- 5 Restore our fortunes, O LORD, *
like the watercourses of the Negev.
- 6 Those who sowed with tears *
will reap with songs of joy.
- 7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, *
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Deacon: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ, according to John.

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

John 1:6-8,19-28

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. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

The Homily

The Rev. Mark Santucci

~ A short silence will be kept ~

Celebrant: Let us reaffirm our faith with the words of the Nicene Creed.

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

Deacon: In quiet anticipation of your coming, O Lord, remind us that you are always with us, that like Joseph we desire to fulfill your will, and we are eager to pray:

Lector: O God, in days to come your house will be established, and your joy shall reign. We pray for the church, and especially Grace and St. James, that you might teach us your ways and that we might walk in your paths. Come Lord Jesus, **and hear our prayer.**

Lector: Out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and you, O God, will judge the nations. We pray for all nations, that your justice and peace would be found by every race, gender and class of people throughout the world. Come Lord Jesus, **and hear our prayer.**

Lector: In your Kingdom, O Lord, wolves lie down with lambs and children play with serpents without fear. We pray for the sick, the suffering, and those in distress of any kind that you would heal all people, comfort everyone in their grief, and bring us to a place to where we can acknowledge our differences and learn from one another. Come Lord Jesus, **and hear our prayer.**

Lector: In your Kingdom, O Lord, even the wilderness and dry land are glad and rejoice. We pray for those who rejoice this week as they celebrate their birthdays and anniversaries that they might obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing might flee away. Come Lord Jesus, **and hear our prayer.**

Lector: In the fullness of time, O God, you sent your son, to be born of our sister Mary. And his name was Emmanuel: God with Us. We thank you for your presence with us, and we pray that you might be always present with those whom we love but see no longer. Come Lord Jesus, **and hear our prayer.**

Celebrant: O Christ, hear our prayers, restore us, and show us the glorious light of your countenance, that we might be reborn in. Come Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

Confession of Sins

Deacon: Let us confess our sins to God.

Silence may be kept

Celebrant and People: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Absolution

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Peace

The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: And also with you.

† **The Holy Communion** †

Offertory Hymn #73 The King shall come when morning dawns

The Doxology

**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 B

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.

Celebrant: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn proclaim the glory of your Name.

Celebrant and the people:

**Holy, 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.

Celebrant:

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

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

Do this for the remembrance of me."

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

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People:

We remember his death,

We proclaim his resurrection,

We await his coming in glory;

Celebrant:

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with St. James 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,

The Lord's Prayer

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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: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us,

People: Therefore let us keep the feast.

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Silence

Celebrant: Let us pray.

A Prayer for Spiritual Communion

Celebrant and the people:

God of love and grace, of justice and peace, we give you thanks that in the Holy Sacrament you assure us of your presence within us, within the body of Christ, and the faithful through all the generations. Grant that we who have witnessed anew these holy mysteries, though unable to receive the physical elements of the Sacrament, may be moved by your indwelling Spirit ever more fully to embody your holy and life giving presence, reshaping in your likeness the world around us, until we are gathered at last into the fullness of your glorious and eternal presence; through Christ our Risen Lord. Amen.

Silence

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Celebrant and People:

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of you 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.

Announcements

Advent Blessing †

May Almighty god, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. **Amen.**

May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. **Amen.**

May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life. **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.**

Closing Hymn #388 Oh Worship the King

The Dismissal

Announcements

On December 20, the 4th Sunday in Advent, The Rt. Rev Ian T. Douglas, Bishop Diocesan, will be with us for an Episcopal Visit. Bishop Douglas will preach and preside at our Holy Friendship virtual worship service at 9:00 AM. And he will join us for coffee hour! With the Bishop presiding from his home and each of us tucked away in our own homes, this service will truly celebrate the ancient tradition of the house church!

Our Christmas Eve Service, December 24, will be held at **7:00 pm** streaming live on Facebook and Zoom with our traditional hymns from 6 different musicians from Grace and St. James! We hope you bring your family to this most holy night. Be sure to have a candle on hand to light as we hear the beauty of Silent night.

On Christmas Eve at 6:00 PM, the residents of the Greater Norwich area and all of eastern Connecticut are being encouraged to **join in the world-wide ringing of bells!** "Nothing can silence the human need to share love and good will during difficult times", said Kevin Harkins, president of Friends of the Norwich Bells. The idea for a global Christmas Eve bell ringing started several weeks ago by one Kathryn Stubbs in Scotland, and has since gone viral. Revelers around the globe will stand on their front door steps and ring bells to spread hope, unity, and good will at the end of a year that has seen so much sadness.

Walk. Pray. Be. with Rachel Thomas Monday, December 14 at noon. Meet at the parking lot of Veterans Field in East Lyme to explore Osweatchie Hills Nature Preserve. Please contact Rachel Thomas via email at rthomas@episcopalct.org Masks are required. Rain cancels the walk.

The New London Homeless Hospitality Center houses hundreds of people experiencing homelessness throughout the south east region. Most of them have nothing to take into the home. We are looking for people willing to put together a "cleaning supply kit" for people moving into new homes. A kit would include: Mop, Broom, Paper towels, Toilet paper, Dish soap, Disinfectant cleaner (Lysol, Fantastic, or other multipurpose cleaner), Glass cleaner, Bathroom cleaner, Sponges, & Floor cleaner. Please contact Deacon Ron at the church office at 860-889-0150.

Yarn Ministry We need scarves, hats, 7"x 9" sections that will be made into blankets, and soap sacks (a sack made out of cotton to hold soap that a person without a home can use to carry the soap as well as use to wash up) to bring to St. Vincent de Paul Place. All donations will go to St. Vincent de Paul Place & the NL Homeless Ctr. Members & friends of Grace of St. James are invited to join the yarn ministry efforts. Contact: Marie Perrin at st.james.parish.yarn.ministry@gmail.com.

The Rev. Kim Litsey is available during the week, Monday's through Thursday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Please call her at the church office: 860-889-0150.