

The Holy Friendship  
of  
St. James Episcopal Church & Grace Episcopal Church



**The Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**December 20, 2020 at 9:00 am**

The Rt. Rev. Bishop Ian T. Douglas Presiding

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 fourth 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: Purify us, O God, by your daily visitation, so that when your Son Jesus Christ comes, he will find in us a mansion prepared for him. We thank you for this time of waiting. May we await the Light of the World with joyful anticipation, through Christ our Lord.**

Reader 1: We continue to wait for the coming of Jesus. Each Sunday during Advent, we have begun in the dark, then we have lit candles. Today, we light all four candles.

Reader 2: Each candle that we light reminds us that the Light of the World will soon come to us in the human form of Jesus. Now, at the end of Advent, all four candles burn brightly with the hope of God who will come to us. Our time of waiting is almost over.

**Congregation: May all of God's people know fullness, justice, peace and love when the Light shines its brightness over our world, when the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us. Amen.**

### Opening Hymn #68 Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

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 O come, O come, Emmanuel vv. 7 & 8

**O come, Desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of man-kind; bid thou our sad divisions cease, and be thyself our King of Peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

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

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

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## The Lessons

### 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

When the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you." But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

### Canticle 15

#### The Song of Mary *Magnificat*

*Luke 1:46-55*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; \*  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed: \*  
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him \*  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm, \*  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, \*  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things, \*  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel, \*  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers, \*  
to Abraham and his children for ever.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. **Amen.**

## Romans 16:25-27

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-- to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever!

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God.**

**Sequence Hymn #72** Hark the Glad Sound

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

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

## Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

**The Homily**

**The Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas**

*~ A short silence will be kept ~*

**Baptismal Covenant**

Celebrant: Do you believe in God the Father?

People: **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Celebrant: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

People: **I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

Celebrant: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**People: I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.**

Celebrant: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers?

**People: I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant: Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

**People: I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant: Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

**People: I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

**People: I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

**People: I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant: Will you cherish the wondrous works of God, and protect the beauty and integrity of all creation?

**People: I will, with God's help.**

### **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 our nation, and 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, especially we pray for Andrew Cannon. 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. 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 #94** While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night

### **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**  
**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*

A Prayer for Spiritual Communion

Celebrant: Let us pray.

**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**

**Blessing †**

**Closing Hymn #657 Love Divine**

**The Dismissal**

**Our Christmas Eve Service** will be held at 7:00 pm streaming live on Facebook and Zoom. Musicians from Grace and St. James will offer traditional music. Please have a candle ready for Silent Night.

On **Christmas Eve** at 6:00 pm, residents of the Greater Norwich area & all of eastern CT 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.

**Epiphany Bonfire** will be held on Wednesday, January 6th. Bring your Christmas trees and wreaths to place into the fire and bring your own hot beverage! Time-TBD

**Virtual Lessons and Carols from our Cathedral** On Sunday, December 27, ECCT will offer a virtual worship service, A Festival of Christmas Lessons and Carols. Filmed around Connecticut, the service will feature lectors, lay participants, clergy, and musicians from across ECCT, including a sermon by Canon for Mission Collaboration, the Rev. Timothy Hodapp. **The service will premiere on ECCT's YouTube Channel at 10 a.m.** Mark your calendars and join us for this very special service. A special Holy Friendship Coffee Hour will follow on Zoom. Share your favorite holiday recipe (virtually of course) and an ugly Christmas Sweater Contest will held. Prizes for 1st and 2nd place will be awarded.

**The New London Homeless Hospitality Center** We are still looking for people willing to put together a "cleaning supply kit" 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 who like to knit or crochet are invited to join the yarn ministry efforts.

Please contact: Marie at [st.james.parish.yarn.ministry@gmail.com](mailto: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.