

**The Holy Friendship  
of  
St. James Episcopal Church, Preston  
and Grace Episcopal Church, Yantic**



**Christmas Eve Worship Service  
December 24, 2020 at 7:00 pm**

Via Zoom

and

Live Stream to Facebook at:

St. James Episcopal Church Preston

Grace Episcopal Church Yantic

The Rev. Kim J. Litsey, Provisional Priest in Charge  
The Rev. Deacon Ronald Steed

Musicians

Myra Day, Organ  
Kevin Harkins, Bells  
Mike LaFleur, Guitar  
Peter Leibert, Concertina  
Paul McGlinchey, Trumpet  
Alan McNeely, Organ  
Margaret Peck, Trumpet

## The Feast of the Nativity

### Prelude

~Alan McNeely

**Bells:** #110 The Snow We Lay on the Ground

~Kevin Harkins

**Opening Hymn** #83 O Come, All Ye Faithful

~Myra Day

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

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

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.**

**The Gloria** #96 Angels We Have Heard on High

~Alan McNeely, Paul McGlinchey, Margaret Peck

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Celebrant: Let us pray.

### 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 Lessons

#### Isaiah 62:6-12

Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have posted sentinels;  
all day and all night  
they shall never be silent.

You who remind the LORD,  
take no rest,  
and give him no rest  
until he establishes Jerusalem  
and makes it renowned throughout the earth.

The LORD has sworn by his right hand  
and by his mighty arm:

I will not again give your grain  
to be food for your enemies,  
and foreigners shall not drink the wine  
for which you have labored;  
but those who garner it shall eat it  
and praise the LORD,  
and those who gather it shall drink it  
in my holy courts.

Go through, go through the gates,  
prepare the way for the people;  
build up, build up the highway,  
clear it of stones,

lift up an ensign over the peoples.  
The LORD has proclaimed  
to the end of the earth:  
Say to daughter Zion,  
"See, your salvation comes;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him."  
They shall be called, "The Holy People,  
The Redeemed of the LORD";  
and you shall be called, "Sought Out,  
A City Not Forsaken."  
The Word of the Lord.  
**People: Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm 97

- 1 The LORD is King;  
let the earth rejoice; \*  
let the multitude of the isles be glad.
- 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him, \*  
righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne.
- 3 A fire goes before him \*  
and burns up his enemies on every side.
- 4 His lightnings light up the world; \*  
the earth sees it and is afraid.
- 5 The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD, \*  
at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
- 6 The heavens declare his righteousness, \*  
and all the peoples see his glory.
- 7 Confounded be all who worship carved images  
and delight in false gods! \*  
Bow down before him, all you gods.
- 8 Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, \*  
because of your judgments, O LORD.
- 9 For you are the LORD,  
most high over all the earth; \*  
you are exalted far above all gods.
- 10 The LORD loves those who hate evil;  
he preserves the lives of his saints  
and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.
- 11 Light has sprung up for the righteous, \*  
and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted.
- 12 Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, \*  
and give thanks to his holy Name.

### Titus 3:4-7

When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Sequence Hymn #78** O' Little Town of Bethlehem

*~Peter Leibert and Mike LaFleur*

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

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

### Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20

[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 Homily**

The Rev. Kim J. Litsey

*~ A short silence will be kept ~*

### 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: As we celebrate with joy the birth of the Christ child, let us offer prayers to God who gives new life to sons and daughters in every place.

Lector: For the timeless birth of the Son of God from the Virgin Mary.  
**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

Lector: For our Bishops, clergy, wardens and vestry, for our Holy Friendship, and for all who minister in Christ.  
**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

Lector: For all believers who put their trust in the incarnate child, Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. And, for those who do not yet believe.  
**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

Lector: For the leaders of the nations and all in authority, and for peace and justice throughout the world.  
**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

Lector: For the towns, villages, cities and country places in Southeast Connecticut, for the bridges that cross our waterways and those that connect our hearts to our neighbors.  
**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

Lector: For those who are suffering economic hardships from the pandemic, the hungry and the oppressed, for those in prison, for the dying and those who have died, especially the 319,000 people in the United States and the 1.7 million people around the world who have died of COVID-19.  
**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

Lector: For our deliverance from holding on to our differences rather than recognizing what we hold in common, and may we always seek to bring about the common good.

**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

Lector: Remembering our most glorious and ever-blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

Celebrant: Source of light and gladness, accept the prayers we offer on this joyful feast. May we grow in Christ who unites our lives to yours and who is Lord for all eternity. We give thanks through Jesus Emmanuel, the Lord with us, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **Confession of Sins**

Deacon: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*~ 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**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive all your sins through the grace of 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 the Lord be always with you.

**People: And also with you.**

## † THE HOLY COMMUNION †

**Offertory Hymn: #93** Angel from the realm of Glory

*~Peter Leibert & Mike LaFleur*

### **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. 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. 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.

**Celebrant and 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 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 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.**

**Communion Hymn #111** Silent Night, Holy Night      ~*Alan McNeely, Paul McGlinchey, Margaret Peck*

### **A Post Communion Prayer**

Celebrant: Let us pray.

**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.**

### **Christmas Blessing †**

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

**Closing Hymn #100** Joy to the world      ~*Alan McNeely, Paul McGlinchey, Margaret Peck*

### **Dismissal:**

**Bells:** Deck the halls      ~ *Kevin Harkins*

**Postlude:** #91 Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light      ~ *Alan McNeely*

**We give thanks to the musicians who gave their gift of music  
to make our Christmas Eve service a joyful celebration!**

**Myra Day - Organ**

**Kevin Harkins - Bells**

**Michael LaFleur - Guitar**

**Peter Leibert - Concertina**

**Paul McGlinchey - Trumpet**

**Alan McNeely - Organ**

**Margaret Peck - Trumpet**

**A special thanks to Deacon Ron Steed and Wendy Connal-Nicolaou for  
being our digital masters of ceremony!**

### **Save the Date**

**Virtual Lessons and Carols** from the Cathedral on Sunday, December 27, ECCT will offer a virtual worship service, A Festival of Christmas Lessons and Carols. Filmed around CT, 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. 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 be held. Prizes for 1st and 2nd place will be awarded.

**Epiphany Christmas Tree Bonfire** Wednesday, January 6 at 6:30 pm held on the St. James Church grounds. Write a note of thanksgiving for 2020 and for your hopes for 2021 and you can place throw them into the fire. Bring your disposed tree, wreaths, a hot beverage & mingle with your parish friends. Peter and Mike will be playing music! Masks are required.

***Merry Christmas!***