

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST  
Holy Eucharist, Rite II  
December 24, 2024 - 5:00 p.m.



HOLY COMFORTER EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA



### WELCOME TO HOLY COMFORTER!

The people of Holy Comforter joyfully welcome you to this historic church. We are happy that you are here, and we hope you will find your worship today meaningful and inspiring.

If you are looking for a church to call your own, we hope you will consider our parish. At the root of all we do is our desire to live out the Great Commandment of Jesus Christ: to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Holy Comforter has made a difference in our lives, and we believe it can do the same for you.

*-The Rev. Gregory B.F. Brown*

### THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

#### PRELUDE

*Music to Celebrate Christ's Nativity*  
Tadd Hoffman, *trumpet* - Jane Arant, *organ*

*Hear, King of Angels*  
from *Christmas Oratorio*, J.S.Bach (1685-1750)

*Pastorale*  
J.S. Bach

*What child is this?*  
Setting by Sandra K Tucker (b. 1957)

*Hark! The herald angels sing*  
Setting by Keith Chapman (1945-1989)

*What is this lovely fragrance?*  
Setting by Sondra K. Tucker

*Angels we have heard on high*  
Alec Wyton (1921-2007)

*Silent Night*  
Calvin Hampton (1938-1984)

### THE HOLY EUCHARIST

WELCOME

PROCESSIONAL HYMN (*please stand*)

#83 *O come, all ye faithful (verses 1-3 & 6)*

### THE WORD OF GOD

OPENING ACCLAMATION AND PRAYER

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

*People* **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. 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 worthy magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

*Angels we have heard on high*

**Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

*Celebrant* The Lord 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 as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE FIRST LESSON (*please be seated*)

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. Thanks be to God.*

PSALM 96 (*read responsively by whole verse*)

*Reader* Sing to the LORD a new song;  
sing to the LORD, all the whole earth.

*People* **Sing to the LORD and bless his Name;**  
**proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.**  
Declare his glory among the nations  
and his wonders among all peoples.  
**For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised;**  
**he is more to be feared than all gods.**  
As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;  
but it is the LORD who made the heavens.  
**Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence!**  
**Oh, the power and the splendor of his sanctuary!**

Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples;  
 ascribe to the LORD honor and power.  
**Ascribe to the LORD the honor due his Name;  
 bring offerings and come into his courts.**  
 Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness;  
 let the whole earth tremble before him.  
**Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is King!  
 he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;  
 he will judge the peoples with equity."**  
 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;  
 let the sea thunder and all that is in it;  
 let the field be joyful and all that is therein.  
**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy  
 before the LORD when he comes,  
 when he comes to judge the earth.**  
 He will judge the world with righteousness  
 and the peoples with his truth.

THE 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. Thanks be to God.*

GOSPEL HYMN

#100 *Joy to the world! (verses 1, 2, & 4)*

THE GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-20 (*The gospel reading will be told as an interactive story*)

THE SERMON

The Rev. Cat H.V. Connolly

STATION AT THE CHRISTMAS CRECHE

*Celebrant* The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us:

*People* **And we beheld his glory.**

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

O God the Son, highest and holiest, who humbled yourself to share our birth and our death: bring us with the shepherds to kneel before your holy cradle, that we may come to sing with your angels your glorious praises in heaven; where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, God, world without end. **Amen.**

*(Verses 1 & 2: sung by the children's choir, Verses 4 & 5 sung by the congregation)*

1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for  
 2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for  
 3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for  
 4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for  
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,  
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone  
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,  
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,  
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.  
 has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.  
 bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.  
 shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.  
 to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.



*Refrain*  
 Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

CHILDREN'S CREED *(standing, spoken in unison)*

**We believe in God, our Father in heaven,**

**God made the world,**

**God gives us life,**

**God helps us grow.**

**We believe in Jesus, the Son of God,**

**Jesus shows us that God is love,**

**Jesus lived and died for us,**

**Jesus is alive now,**

**alive in us and in our neighbor.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**who helps us love others,**

**who makes us holy,**

**who helps us know God better.**

**We believe in God's family, the Church.**

**We believe that we will live joyfully with God forever and ever.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*Deacon* Almighty God, your angel host announces that peace is born among us, embodied in human flesh. With confidence in the power of that miracle, we bring you our prayers for the church and the world, saying together, Come now, O God of love.

*Intercessor* That the child born to us this night may inspire us to heal our broken and hurting world, and that the peace proclaimed by angels in the shepherds' field may be realized in every place of war and on every violent street, we pray to you, O God.

*People* **Come now, O God of love.**

That the joy and consolation of the Wonderful Counselor will bring wholeness and healing to all who are afflicted, oppressed or in despair, and that our lives may be offerings of hope to those who are grieving, we pray to you, O God.

**Come now, O God of love.**

That as you entered the world in the poverty of a stable, you would instill in us compassion and courage to dismantle the barriers that separate us from one another, so that together we may build the just world you intended, we pray to you, O God.

**Come now, O God of love.**

That the blessed hope we celebrate this night may be the fulfillment of all who have gone before, knitting your people into shared life for all eternity, we pray to you, O God.

**Come now, O God of love.**

Light of life, you came in flesh, born into human pain and joy, and gave us power to be your children. Grant us faith, O Christ, to see your presence among us. Fill us with your light, that as we walk in the way of peace, we may join our voices with heaven and earth in singing songs of gladness, we pray to you, O God.

**Come now, O God of love.**

*Celebrant* Welcome, Jesus, our humble Savior. Welcome to you, the face of the living God. We give thanks that you have come not only unto Bethlehem but into our hearts and lives. Hear the prayers we offer this night and help us by your grace to share your peace, kindness and love. In your most holy name we pray, **Amen.**

THE PEACE (*please stand*)

*Celebrant* The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

OFFERTORY

*Lo, how a rose e'er blooming* (Johannes Brahms, 1833-1897)

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PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS (*all stand to sing*)

*Good Christian friends, rejoice!*

**Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;  
Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.  
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Musical notation for the Great Thanksgiving, featuring four staves with lyrics. The first staff is for the Celebrant and the second for the People. The third and fourth staves are for the Celebrant and People respectively. The lyrics are: "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."

*The Celebrant continues*

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 gave Jesus Christ, your only Son, to be born for us; who, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, was made perfect Man of the flesh of the Virgin Mary his mother; so that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin, and receive power to become your children. 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:

THE SANCTUS

S130 (Schubert)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and  
 might, Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,  
 God of power and might, hea - ven and earth are  
 full, full of your glo - ry. Ho -  
 san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na  
 in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes  
 in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na  
 in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.



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,

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

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 the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, Joseph 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,

**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.**

Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, bear - er of our sins: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, re - deem - er, re - deem - er of the world:

give us your peace, give us your peace.

The Gifts of God for the People of God. For all of you here present, and all of you viewing this at home, not able to participate but in a distanced Celebration of Holy Eucharist.

## COMMUNION HYMNS

#79 *O little town of Bethlehem* (omit verse 4)  
#101 *Away in a manger*

POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER (*please stand or kneel*)

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

*All* **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.**

CANDLELIGHTING HYMN

*Candles are lit and church lights are darkened at this time.*

*Silent Night*

1. **Silent night, holy night,  
all is calm, all is bright  
round yon virgin mother and child.  
Holy infant, so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace.**

2. **Silent night, holy night,  
shepherds quake at the sight,  
glories stream from heaven afar,  
heavenly hosts sing alleluia;  
Christ, the Savior, is born!**

3. **Silent night, holy night,  
Son of God, love's pure light  
radiant beams from thy holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

THE CHRISTMAS BLESSING

May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of his holiness. **Amen.**

May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel. **Amen.**

May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor. **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.**

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

*#87 Hark! The herald angels sing!*

DISMISSAL

*Deacon* Let us go forth in the name of Christ.  
*People* **Thanks be to God.**

VOLUNTARY

*In dulci jubilo, BWV 729 (J.S.Bach)*

*The altar flowers are given to the glory of God,  
and in celebration of the wedding anniversary of Camilla and Bob Murphy.*

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**CLERGY & STAFF**

The Reverend Greg Brown, Rector  
The Reverend Cat Connolly, Associate Rector  
The Reverend Daisy Colon, Deacon  
Dr. Patrick Pope, Director of Music  
Jessica Dunlap, Director of Parish Life  
Kimberly Rockas, Director of Children's Ministries  
Holly Williams, Parish Administrator  
Trish Stukbauer, Director of Communications  
Maguilida Rowe, ESL Coordinator  
Lauren Cavins, Director of La Escuelita Weekday School

*Staff email addresses are first name, last initial @holycomfortercharlotte.org*

**VESTRY**

*Terms ending 2024:* Joyce Bott (Senior Warden), Natalie Castro, Jason Evans, Carlyle Knox (Junior Warden)

*Terms ending 2025:* Mary Amos, Anne Binns (Clerk), Tom Cooke, Bob Murphy

*Terms ending 2026:* Tim Cavins, Jacqueline Howells, Niki Manke, Diana Smith



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