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)

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

WELCOME

PROCESSIONAL HYMN (please stand)

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

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 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!

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THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

And also with you. People

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.

Isaiah 9:2-7

THE FIRST LESSON (please be seated) 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)

Keader	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

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

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

THE GOSPEL

THE SERMON

The Rev. Cat H.V. Connolly

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

Titus 2:11-14

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**.

Christ be our light (Verses 1 & 2: sung by the children's choir, Verses 4 & 5 sung by the congregation)



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.

Hymn

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)

CelebrantThe peace of the Lord be always with you.PeopleAnd also with you.

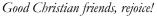
THE HOLY COMMUNION

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OFFERTORY

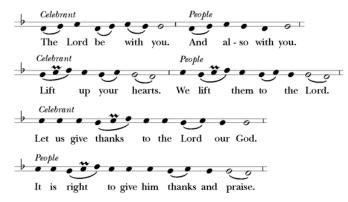
Lo, how a rose e'er blooming (Johannes Brahms, 1833-1897)

You are invited to contribute financially to Holy Comforter's mission and ministry by placing your gift in the offering plate as it is passed, or by giving electronically via the QR code printed here.



PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS (all stand to sing) 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!

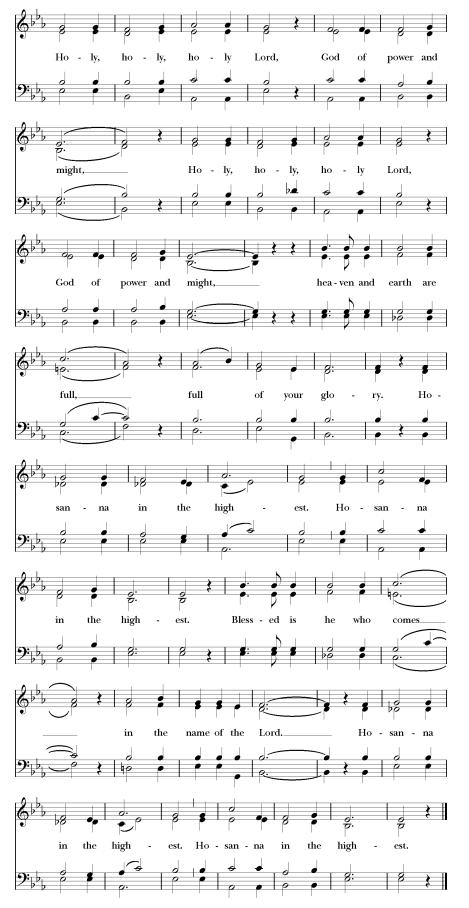
THE GREAT THANKSGIVING



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:





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.

S164 (Schubert)



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.

Silent Night

CANDLELIGHTING HYMN Candles are lit and church lights are darkened at this time.

 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

DeaconLet us go forth in the name of Christ.PeopleThanks 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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