

WELCOME TO
The Church of St. Paul and Safe Harbor Presbyterian
A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS WITH THE LORD'S SUPPER
December 24, 2023 4:00 PM

Introit: #82

1. Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be, he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he, of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore.
2. O that birth for ever blessed, when the Virgin full of grace, by the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race; and the Babe, the world's Redeemer, first revealed his sacred face, evermore and evermore.
3. Let the heights of heaven adore him; angels hosts, his praises sing; powers, dominions, bow before him, and extol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be silent, every voice in concert ring, evermore and evermore.

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever.
Amen.

***Opening Hymn #83**

1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; come, and behold him, born the King of angels;

Ref: O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.

2. God from God, Light from Light eternal, lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb; only begotten Son of the Father; *Ref:*

3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heaven above; glory to God, glory in the highest. *Ref:*

Let us pray:

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.

Lesson: Isaiah 9: 2-4, 6-7

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.

Hymn #81 "Lo how a Rose e'er blooming"

1. Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung! Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung. It came, a blossom bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

2. Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind, with Mary we behold it, the Virgin Mother kind. To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior, when half spent was the night.

Lesson: 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 Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Let us pray:

Father in heaven, by your grace the virgin mother of your incarnate Son was blessed in bearing him, but still more blessed in keeping your word: Grant us who honor the exaltation of her lowliness to follow the example of her devotion to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn 277 (Tune: Nettleton)

1. Sing of Mary, pure and lowly, virgin mother undefiled; sing of God's own Son most holy, who became her little child. Fairest child of fairest mother, God the Lord who came to earth, Word made flesh, our very brother, takes our nature by his birth.

3. Glory be to God the Father; glory be to God the Son; glory be to God the Spirit; glory to the Three in one. From the heart of blessed Mary, from all saints to song ascends, and the Church the strain reechoes unto earth's remotest ends.

Reading: "O Simplicitas" Madeline L'Engle

An angel came to me
And I was unprepared
To be what God was using.
Mother I was to be.
A moment I despaired,
Thought briefly of refusing.
The angel knew I heard.
According to God's Word
I bowed to this strange choosing.

A palace should have been
The birthplace of a king
(I had no way of knowing).
We went to Bethlehem;
It was so strange a thing.
The wind was cold, and blowing,
My cloak was old, and thin.
They turned us from the inn;
The town was overflowing.

God's Word, a child so small,
Who still must learn to speak,
Lay in humiliation.
Joseph stood, strong and tall.

The beasts were warm and meek
And moved with hesitation.
The Child born in a stall?
I understood it: all.
Kings came in adoration.

Perhaps it was absurd:
The stable set apart,
The sleepy cattle lowing;
And the incarnate Word
Resting against my heart.
My joy was overflowing.
The shepherds came, adored
The folly of the Lord,
Wiser than all men's knowing.

Lesson.....Matthew 1:18-24

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Reading "Joseph's Suspicion" by Rainer M. Rilke

And the angel, taking some pains, told
Considerately the man who clenched his fists:
"But can't you see in her robe's every fold
That she is cool as the Lord's morning mists?"

But the other murmured, looking sinister:
"What is it that has wrought this change in her?"
Then cried the angel to him: "Carpenter,
Can't you see yet that God is acting here?"

"Because you plane the planks, of your pride could
You really make the Lord God answerable,
Who unpretentiously from the same wood
Makes the leaves burst forth, the young buds swell?"
He understood that. And then as he raised

His frightened glance toward the angel who
Had gone away . . . slowly the man drew
Off his heavy cap. Then in song he praised.

#92

1. On this day earth shall ring with the song children
sing to the Lord, Christ our King, born on earth to
save us: him the Father gave us.

Ref: Ideo-o-o, Ideo-o-o; Ideo gloria in excelsis Deo!

2. His the doom, ours the mirth; when he came
down to earth Bethlehem saw his birth; ox and ass
beside him from the cold could hide him. *Ref:*

Lesson: Luke 2:1-7

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.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Hymn # 79 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee
lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent
stars go by; yet in thy dark streets shineth the
everlasting Light; the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

2. For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of
wondering love. O morning stars, together proclaim
the holy birth! and praises sing to God the King, and
peace to men on earth.

3. How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is
given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings
of his heaven. No ear may hear his coming, but in
this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him,
still the dear Christ enters in.

Reading: "The Oxen" by Thomas Hardy

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock

'Now they are all on their knees."
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.
We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.
So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
'Come, see the oxen kneel.'
In the lonely barn by yonder comb
Our childhood used to know
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

Lesson: Luke 2:8-20

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.

Hymn 96 "Angels we have heard on high"

1. Angels we have heard on high, singing sweetly
through the night, and the mountains in reply
echoing their brave delight.

Ref: Gloria, in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why these songs of
happy cheer? What great brightness did you see?
What glad tidings did you hear? *Ref.*

3. Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing; come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. *Ref.*

Lesson: Matthew 2:1-6

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Let us pray:

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading: "First Coming" by Madeline L'Engle

He did not wait till the world was ready,
Till men and nations were at peace.
He came when the Heavens were unsteady and
prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
Turned water into wine. He did not wait.

Till hearts are pure. In joy he came
To a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anquished shame
He came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,
To heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
The Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane
To raise our songs with joyful voice,
For to share our grief, to touch our pain,

He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

Hymn #107

1. Good Christians 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!

2. Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye hear of endless bliss; Jesus Christ was born for this! He hath opened heaven's door, and we are blest for evermore. Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

3. Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save! Calls you one and calls you all to gain his everlasting hall. Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save.

Sermon

Still, Still, Still - Sung by St. Paul's Choir

Affirmation of Faith (New Zealand BCP)

You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do. You have always been with us.
You are God.
You, O God, are infinitely generous, Good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you. You have revealed and proved your love for us in Jesus Christ, who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.
You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your gospel in the world. You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.
You are our God. We worship you.

Prayers of the People

Brothers and sisters, on this most holy night of our Lord's birth, that we may find peace, joy, and contentment in this holy season, let us pray for ourselves and all those in need of our prayers, saying: Lord, hear our prayer.

(As the Spirit moves you, please take turns reading one or more of the petitions. Please observe a short

silence at the indicated times.)

For the church of Christ, that it may faithfully proclaim the good news of salvation and may care for the needs of God's people in all corners of the world, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For peace in our troubled world, that the darkness of war and injustice may be replaced by the light of peace and love, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all those in need of our prayers: the homeless; the unemployed; the hungry; those who are hospitalized; those who are imprisoned in body or soul; and all those for whom this season is one not of joy but of trial and sadness, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the sick, that their illnesses may be turned into health and their sorrow into rejoicing, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who labor this night on behalf of others: doctors and nurses, police officers and firefighters, gas station attendants, bus and taxi drivers, and all those whose work prevents them from sharing this evening with those they love, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces, and all those who are first responders in times of crisis. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others:

(During the silence, add your prayers orally or in private.)

In thanksgiving we remember the lives of those who have gone before us in the faith. That we, like them, may remain faithful to the end and live forever in the light of your eternal glory, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Mighty God, mercifully hear the prayers of the people you have chosen as your own. Give us zeal in our ministries and joy in our work, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

(Greet one another with the peace of Christ and with Christmas blessings.)

Offertory Hymns #87

1. Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the new-born King! Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled! Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim Christ is born in Bethlehem!

Ref: Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the new-born King!

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord; late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate Deity. Pleased as man with us to dwell; Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Ref:*

Prayer over the gifts: Source of light and gladness, accept all we offer on this joyful feast. May we grow up in him who unites our lives to yours; for he is Lord now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

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 on this night 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 forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your name.

S130

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.

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;**

The Celebrant continues

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 Holy Family 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.**
The Word became flesh and dwelled among us, that as children of God we might dare to pray:

Sung to tune of Jack Noble White see inside cover of hymnal

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread.
Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

Invitation to Communion

Behold Mary's child, the promised Savior, of whose fullness we have all received. Blessed are those who are called to the banquet of the Lamb.

All who feel called to receive the Lord's Body and Blood are encouraged to come forward and receive at this time.

Hymn during the Communion, #101

1. Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes. I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, and stay by my side until morning is nigh.
3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay close by me for ever, and love me I pray. Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

After Communion, the Celebrant says
Father of all, the child born for us is the Savior of the world. May he who made us your children welcome us into your kingdom, where he is alive and reigns with you now and forever.

Let us pray.

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 the 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.

Blessing Hymn #111

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. Sleep in heavenly peace.
2. Silent night, holy night, Shepherds quake at the sight, Glories stream from heaven afar, Heav'nly hosts sing alleluia; Christ, the savior, is born! 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, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Christmas Blessing:

When he came to us as man, the Son of God scattered the darkness of this world, and filled this holy night with his glory. May the God of infinite goodness scatter the darkness of sin and brighten your hearts with holiness.

God sent his angels to shepherds to herald the great joy of our Savior's birth. May he fill you with joy and make you heralds of his gospel.

When the Word became man, earth was joined to heaven. May he give you his peace and good will, and fellowship with all the heavenly host.

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Rejoicing in Emmanuel, God-is-with-us, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Recessional Hymn #100 "Joy to the World"

1. Joy to the world the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King; Let ev'ry heart prepare him room, and heav'n and nature sing.
2. Joy to the world the Savior reigns; let men their songs employ While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, Repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found.
4. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove The glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love.

THANK YOU TO OUR MUSICIANS!

**JACK MARZANO ON VIOLA
KATE HEPWORTH ON PIANO
ST. PAUL'S CHOIR**

