

# Christmas Eve Family Worship



**Welcome to All Saints Episcopal Church**

**December 24, 2023**

**5:00 pm**

The Rev. William Petersen, Celebrant  
The Rev. Elizabeth Preysner, Preacher  
Holly Simons, Minister of Music

**Prelude**      What Child is this? – *English melody arranged by Carol Foss*  
I wonder as I wander – *Appalachian carol arranged by Jack Schrader*  
Silent Night – *Franz Gruber, arranged by Karen Kuehmann*  
*Claudia Bissett, flute*

**Welcome** Pastor Bill

**Gathering Song**                      *O Come All Ye Faithful*                      (verses 1-3)

*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;*

[Refrain]      *O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord*

*God from God, Light from Light eternal,  
lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
only begotten Son of the Father.* [Refrain]

*Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
glory to God, glory in the highest.* [Refrain]

### **Opening Acclamation**

*Celebrant*      Our King and Savior now draws near.  
*All*              **Come let us adore him. Amen.**

### **The Collect for the Christmas Eve**

*Celebrant*      The Lord be with you.  
*All*              **And also with you.**  
*Celebrant*      Let us pray together.

**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 First Lesson**

*Light shines: a child is born for us*

**Isaiah 9:2, 4,6**

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. 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 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.

*Reader* Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

## **The Christmas Gospel**

*The Nativity of Our Lord: God With Us*

**Luke 2:1-20**

### **The Birth of Jesus**

About that time the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to the hometown of their father so they could be counted. So Joseph went with Mary, his fiancée, who by then was quite pregnant from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. He went. When they arrived, all the inns were full. Finally, a kind man let them sleep in his stable with the animals.

While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. In the stable a cow was mooing, and the donkey brayed. Then everyone heard the sound of a baby! Mary wrapped him in a blanket and placed him gently in the manger on a bed of hay. All the animals gathered around and tried to snuffle the new baby with their noses.

## **We Respond in Song**

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

(verses 1 & 2)

*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.*

*For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above while mortals sleep,  
the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.*

*O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!*

## An Event for Everyone

There were shepherders camping in just outside of town where they had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I bring the most wonderful news. God's Son has been born in Bethlehem! He will bring great peace and joy that is meant for everybody around the world. He brings love and forgiveness to everyone, he will be known as Jesus the Messiah, our Savior and Lord. This is what you are to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and sleeping in a manger." Then other angels appeared in the night sky and the huge angelic choir began singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and Peace to all people on earth!"

### **We Respond in Song**

*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

(verses 1 and 3)

***Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."  
Joyful, all you nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;  
with angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"***

***Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,  
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"***

## The Gift of God With Us

As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherders talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They sang songs of praise that filled the night and gave thanks to God for the greatest gift of love.

### **We Respond in Song**

*Go Tell it On the Mountain*

(verses 1-3)

[Refrain] ***Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!***

***While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.*** [Refrain]

*The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.* [Refrain]

*Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born; and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.* [Refrain]

### **Sharing the Good News**

Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. But the shepherders returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had seen and heard. It had turned out exactly the way they'd been told by the Angels and all who heard the shepherders were impressed!

**We Respond in Song**                      *Good Christian Friends Rejoice*                      (verses 2 & 3)

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

*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 the everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!*

### **Christmas Message**

#### **The Peace**

*Celebrant*      Unto us this night, in the City of David, is born a Savior  
                         who is Christ the Lord. Peace on earth to all by God's favor.  
                         The peace of Christ be always with you.

*All*                      **And also with you.**

#### **The Offering ~ *We share the gifts God has blessed us with***

We rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of God's grace. As we have been blessed with gifts from God, let them be blessing for others as we give thanks for the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Offertory Praise**            O Holy Night (v 1,3)

*O holy night, the stars are brightly shining;  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
Till He appeared and the soul felt His worth.  
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.*

**[CHORUS]**

*Fall on your knees, O hear the angel voices,  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!  
O night, divine, O night when Christ was born!*

*Truly He taught us to love one another,  
His law is Love, and His gospel is Peace;  
chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother,  
and in His Name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we;  
Let all within us praise His Holy Name!*

**[CHORUS]**

*Christ is the Lord! Then ever, ever praise we,  
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!  
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!*

**The Holy Communion ~ God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ**

**Common Worship Eucharistic Prayer 2**

*The Church of England developed this for use when a significant number of children are present.*

*Celebrant*     The Lord is here  
*All*             **His Spirit is with us.**

*Celebrant*     Lift up your hearts.  
*All*             **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Celebrant*     Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
*All*             **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

*Celebrant*     Why is it right to give thanks and praise?  
*All*             **Listen, and we will hear.**

Lord of all life, you created the universe, where all living things reflect your glory.  
You give us this great and beautiful earth, to discover and to cherish.

You give us happy times and things to celebrate. In these we taste your kingdom,  
a feast for all your children. You made us all, each wonderfully different,  
to join with the angels and sing your praise:

**Sanctus (sung to tune "Bring a torch, Jeannette Isabella")**

***Holy, holy, holy One. God of power, God of might. Heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed! Blessed! is the One Who comes... Blessed! Blessed! in the name of God.***

We thank you loving Father, because, when we turned away, you sent Jesus, your Son. He gave his life for us on the cross and shows us the way to live.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

*Celebrant* Why do we share this bread and wine?

*All* **Listen, and we will hear.**

On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying: 'This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying: 'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.'

So Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life. As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit, and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Savior.

*Celebrant* How do we follow Jesus Christ?

*All* **Listen, and we will hear.**

Help us, Father, to love one another, as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended, and all creation is gathered in your loving arms. And now with Mary, Joseph and all your saints we give you glory, through Jesus Christ, in the strength of the Spirit, today and for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

## **Lord's Prayer**

*(sung to tune of Away in a Manger; lyrics: Mark Vitalis Hoffman)*

***Our Father in heaven, all praise to Your name! Your kingdom among us, Your presence proclaimed! What You want to happen, grant that it be done On earth as in heaven, now for everyone.***

***For bread that is needed, provide us each day; As we forgive others, our sins take away; Don't bring us to testing more than we can bear, But save us from evil by Your loving care.***

***For Yours is the kingdom; o'er all things You reign. And Yours is the power, all things You maintain. To You be the glory, resounding again From all of creation, forever! Amen.***

## **Invitation to Communion**

The mystery hidden for the ages is revealed for us in this meal.  
Come, behold and receive your God.

**Communion Piano Meditation**      The First Noel - *arr. Jay Rouse*

## **Post Communion Prayer**

**Emmanuel, God with us, you grace us with life and breath and give us bread for the journey. Send us out in service to this world that you love, telling the amazing news of your coming to be Savior and Lord of all. Amen.**

**The Gospel of the Incarnation**      **John 1:1-14**

*The Celebrant lights a large candle from an altar candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world of whom John's gospel speaks. The ushers light their candles from the Celebrant's candle, then light the candle of each worshiper nearest the aisle. The lighted candle is never tilted, but is always held upright when giving light to another.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him.



He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

**Candle Hymn** *Silent Night*

*We will listen to the music of Silent Night and not sing it to honor the 180,000 Christians in the Holy Land whose leaders have called to refrain from organizing any unnecessarily festive Advent and Christmas activities in solidarity with the victims of the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. May our silence be a prayer for peace.*

**Blessing for Christmas**

May the Word that Mary brought to birth carry you into new and abundant life.

**Amen.**

May the Word that Joseph cradled in his arms enfold you with love and strength.

**Amen.**

May the Word that angels proclaimed in song bring harmony to our world.

**Amen.**

And may the blessings of almighty God, the Father, the ☩ Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

*Individual candles are extinguished and the congregation stands.*

**Sending Hymn** *Joy to the World* (verses 1, 3, 4)

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King;  
let every heart prepare him room and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.*

*No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns in fest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.*

## The Dismissal

*The God we worship is never confined to this holy place. So go and travel with the God who is found in ordinary and surprising places.*

*Celebrant*      Worship need not cease.

*All*                **It can echo in our lives, in our words, in our deeds,  
in our moods, and in our dreams.**

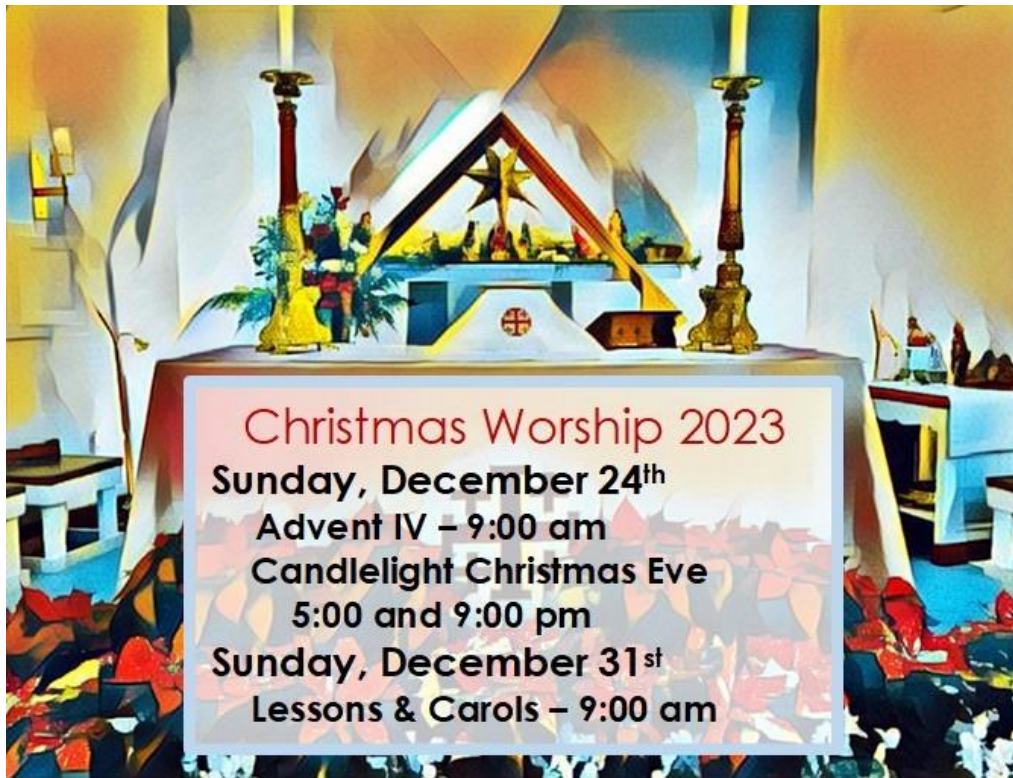
*Celebrant*      Carry worship with you wherever you may go.

*All*                **Thanks be to God. Merry Christmas!**

## Postlude

People, look East - *French carol, arr. R. Lau*

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**Welcome** those who are single, married, divorced, widowed, straight, gay, uncertain, filthy rich, comfortable, or have very little. We offer a special welcome to wailing babies and excited toddlers of all ages.

**Welcome** whether you can sing like Pavarotti or just growl quietly to yourself, if you're church shopping, have just woken up, just got out of prison, or haven't been to church in years.

**Welcome** those over 60 but haven't grown up yet and teens who are growing up too fast, marathoners and pickleball players, starving artists, tree huggers, vegans and junk food eaters.

**Welcome** those of you in recovery or still addicted, if you're having problems, don't have it together or aren't sure about organized religion (we're with you on that one!)

**Welcome** those who think the Earth is flat, work too hard, don't work, can't spell, or are here because your Mother guilted you to be here.

**Welcome** those who are inked, pierced, both or neither. We offer a special welcome to those who could use a prayer right now, had religion shoved down their throats as kids, or just got lost looking for the lake and ended up here by mistake.

**We're glad you're here and remind you that God loves you—no exceptions!**



All Saints Wolfeboro strives to be a vibrant faith community—walking the Way of Love together. We are spiritually fulfilled and transformed by God's Word and Sacraments as we gather to worship, learn and follow Jesus. We share the love of God by welcoming and caring for people who come through our doors and by going outside our doors to engage in thriving, powerful ministries that provide meaningful help to our community. All Saints is known as a people and place to learn, worship, and grow in relationship with Jesus, and as a center for healing and giving to the community.

Inspired by the love of God and neighbor, we value...

- Joyful Service and Sharing;
- Unconditional Acceptance and Inclusion; and
- Compassionate Care of Community and Creation.

**About All Saints'** ~ We welcome you to a church that is clear about the Christian faith that stands in the rich tradition of Christian worship that encourages people to grow in the faith they profess, that believes we ought to live so as to make a difference in the world. If you are looking for such a church, then All Saints' Episcopal Church is for you - we invite you into our community of faith.

**How to use this Worship Bulletin** ~ We follow the order of worship from The Book of Common Prayer as it is printed in this bulletin. Leader parts are in regular print; the congregation parts are in **bold** print. Notes and directions are printed in *italics*. Hymn numbers are noted in this bulletin and can be found in The Hymnal 1982 found in the pew racks.

**All are invited to receive Communion in this church.**

**The Common Cup as an Option** Following guidance from Bishop +Rob to clergy and discussion with our Worship and Music Team and Vestry, we will offer the option of receiving wine by common cup as we offer the option of gluten free bread during Holy Communion. The Eucharistic Ministers will continue to distribute wine via individual cups and if you desire the common cup\*, please ask Pastor Bill (just as you would for gluten free).

**\*Note:** *For sanitation concerns and at the direction of our bishop, we will no longer offer the opportunity for Intinction (the dipping of the bread/wafer into the wine. The common cup is only available for drinking from.*

**Facility Information** ~ Handicap accessible restrooms are located downstairs in the hallways exiting the Parish Hall and upstairs in the hallway exiting the sanctuary. A small restroom is located off the narthex lobby at the rear of the worship space. We welcome children in worship, but should you (or they) need, an unstaffed nursery area is located off the narthex lobby.

**Seeking a Church Home?** ~ If you would like additional information about All Saints', are seeking a faith community to call home, or interested in exploring your faith, please speak with the rector.

**Masks are not required** in the building at the present time. However, if you feel more comfortable wearing a mask, then you are encouraged to do so.

**Sharing of the peace** will be done from your seat only.

**Offering plates** are available at entrances to the worship space or giving online @ [wolfesaints.com](http://wolfesaints.com).

**We continue to livestream** for those unable to worship in person.



Ministers: All the People of All Saints'  
Bishop: The Rt. Rev. A. Robert Hirschfeld  
Rector: The Rev. William "Bill" Petersen  
Priest Associate: The Rev. Elizabeth Preysner  
Minister of Music: Holly Simons  
Sunday School Teacher: Danielle Pierpont  
Parish Administrator: Debra Hoyt  
Sexton: Mark McLaughlin