ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Concord, New Hampshire

Christmas Eve

Welcome to the Celebration of the Birth of the Christ Child

December 24, 2023 6:00 & 9:00 pm

Please note both services are live streamed and recorded for our YouTube Channel. Streamed with permission under One License #A-740364. All rights reserved.

PRELUDE MUSIC

Angels We Have heard on High O Holy Night I Wander as I Wonder What Child is This Brass Quartet Sarah Dickinson, soloist Brass Quartet Andrew Livernois, soloist

BIDDING PRAYER & BLESSING OF CRECHE

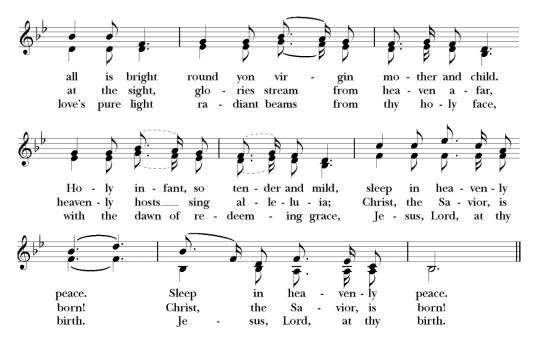
Beloved in Christ, we come by this service to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels and to go in heart and mind to Bethlehem, to see the loving-kindness of our God, and the Babe lying in a manger. Let us open our hearts to Scripture and ask the Lord to save us from our sins and make us pure and happy, and let us thank God with our carols and praise. First, let us pray for the needs of this world; and especially for peace and goodwill among all people especially in the Holy Land; in the Ukraine; in various parts Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, that all will find peace and learn to love one another, as children of the one God of all.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world: The shepherds kept watch by night: The darkness is not dark to you: Let your light scatter the darkness: The Word was made flesh: A light no darkness can extinguish. Your glory shone round about them. The night is as bright as the day. And illumine your Church with your glory. And dwelt among us: We behold his glory.

Dear Friends, let us pray that God will bless this crèche, that all who worship the Son, born of the Virgin Mary, may come to share Christ's life in glory. Almighty and everlasting God, your Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary for us and for our salvation; bless + this Crèche which we have prepared to celebrate that holy birth, when you took on our flesh and became one with us; may all who see it be strengthened in faith, and receive the fullness of life he came to bring; who is alive and reigns for ever. **Amen.**

CRECHE HYMN Silent night, holy night STILLE NACHT





THE SALUTATION

Welcome all wonders in one sight! Eternity shut in a span. **Summer in winter, Day in night, Heaven in earth, and God in man.**

Great little one whose all-embracing birth **Brings earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth.**

I bring you good news of great joy: a Savior has been born to you. Alleluia! **Unto us a child is born, a son is given. Alleluia!**

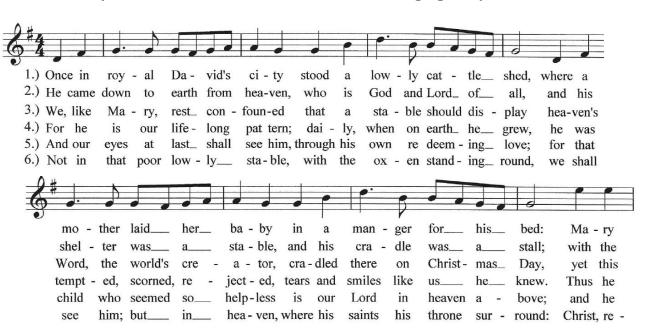
He is Christ the Lord. Alleluia! **We worship and adore him. Alleluia!**

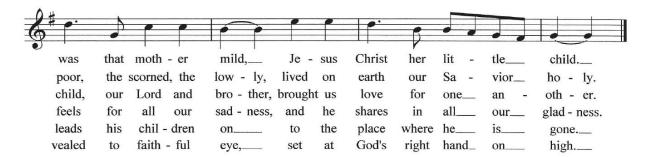
THE PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Once in Royal David's city

IRBY

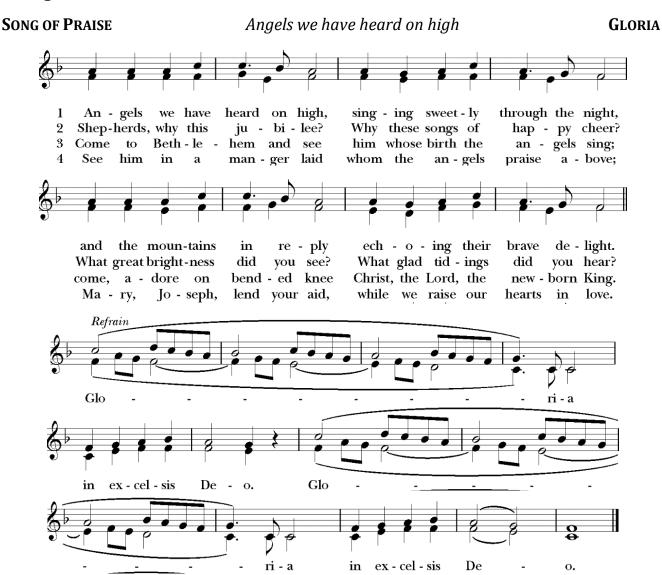
(Verse 1, Soloist; Verse 2, Choir; Verses 3-6 Congregation)





COLLECT OF PURITY FOR CHRISTMAS

We pray you, Lord, to purify our hearts so that they may be worthy to become your dwelling place. Let us never fail to find room for you, but come and abide in us, that we also may abide in you, for as at this time you were born into the world for us, and live and reign, King of kings and Lord of lords, now and forever. Amen.



THE CHRISTMAS COLLECT

God of Abraham and Sarah, of David and his descendants, unwearied is your love for us and steadfast is your covenant; wonderful beyond words is your gift of the Savior, born of the Virgin Mary. Count us among the people in whom you delight, draw all generations into the embrace of

your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

THE HEBREW TESTAMENT LESSON: A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH 9:2-7

From the Hebrew Bible we hear a hymn of thanksgiving and hope offered at the bird of a new king in Jerusalem. The prophet hails the one born to be the ruler of his people. His reign will end oppression and bring justice, righteousness, and a lasting peace. Christians see these words coming to fulfillment in Jesus.

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.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people. Thanks be to God.

PSALM 96

A song of praise to the Lord in which the whole heavens and earth are invited to join.

- 1 Sing to the LORD a new song; * sing to the LORD, all the whole earth.
- 2 Sing to the LORD and bless his Name; * proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.
- 3 Declare his glory among the nations * and his wonders among all peoples.
- 4 For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; * he is more to be feared than all gods.
- 5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; * but it is the LORD who made the heavens.
- 6 Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence! * Oh, the power and the splendor of his sanctuary!
- 7 Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples; * ascribe to the LORD honor and power.
- 8 Ascribe to the LORD the honor due his Name; * bring offerings and come into his courts.
- 9 Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; * let the whole earth tremble before him.

- 10 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."
- 11 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.
- 12 Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the LORD when he comes, * when he comes to judge the earth.
- 13 He will judge the world with righteousness * and the peoples with his truth.

THE EPISTLE: A READING FROM PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS 2:11-14

This reading speaks of the two comings of Christ: first in his sacrificial ministry for all people and then in glory. He has enabled his disciples to free themselves from ways of evil. Disciplined and eager to do good, they look forward to the fulfillment of the hope God has given to the world in Jesus.

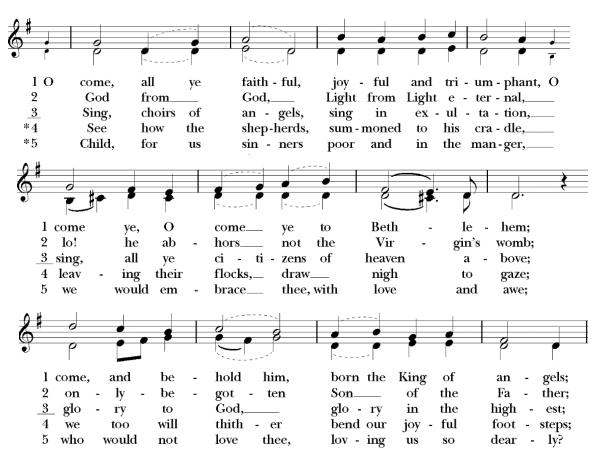
For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus 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.

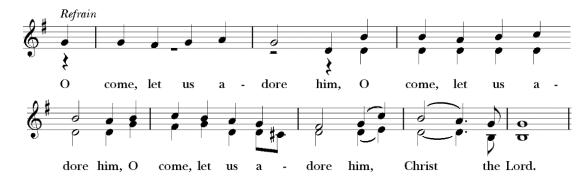
Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people. Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL HYMN

O Come All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELIS





THE HOLY GOSPEL: Please stand in body or spirit.

LUKE 2:1-20

The gospel presents the story of the birth of Jesus. He is born amid very humble human circumstances. A government registration program requires Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem, the city of David. Because there is no place for them to stay, Mary lays her new son in a stable manger (feeding trough). An angel then appears to some shepherds and announces the joyful news of the Savior's birth.

The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke. *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

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. Praise to you, Lord Christ.

THE HOMILY

THE REV. DENIS BRUNELLE

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 flesh.

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

Officiant: Tonight, we keep watch for the birth of our Savior. As we wait, let us pray to the God who loves us without end.

Creator God, in this holy night your Son our Savior was born in human form.

Renew your Church as the body of Christ.

Hear us O Lord.

In this holy night Christians, the world over celebrates his birth.

Open our hearts that he may be born in us this night.

Hear us O Lord.

In this holy night there was no room for your Son in the inn.

Protect with your love those who have no home and all who live in poverty.

Hear us O Lord.

In this holy night Mary in the pain of labor brought your Son to birth. Hold in your hand all of our family and parish members who are ill especially, Michel, Bob, Russ, Nathan, Nancy, JoAnn, Tammy, Linda, Erin, Bob & Lynne, Ryan, Ed, Ann, Edgar, Casper, Bettey, Diane and those we mention aloud or in our hearts at this time: (*pause*) and for all the members of our armed forces serving at home and abroad, and for all who are in pain or distress today.

Heal all those in need of your love and mercy.

Hear us O Lord.

In this holy night your Christ came as a light shining in the darkness.

Bring comfort to all who suffer in the sadness of our world.

Hear us O Lord.

In this holy night shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy.

Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ's redemption.

Hear us O Lord.

In this holy night the angels sang "Peace to God's people on earth." Strengthen those who work for peace and justice in the Middle East, Ukraine, South Sudan, throughout the world, and here at home.

Bless our world O holy child of Bethlehem.

Hear us O Lord.

In this holy night strangers found the Holy Family and saw the baby lying in the manger. Bless our homes and all whom we love.

Hear us O Lord.

Officiant: Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

THE CONFESSION, ABSOLUTION AND PEACE

from An African Prayer Book, Desmond

Tutu, ed.

Most Holy God, in the midst of this season of new life, we confess:

We have resisted the light of your love;

We have not fully shared the gifts entrusted to us; and

We have not treasured the gifts of others around us.

We stand in need of your love.

Holy Father, make us holy.

Holy Jesus, make us holy.

Holy Spirit, make us holy.

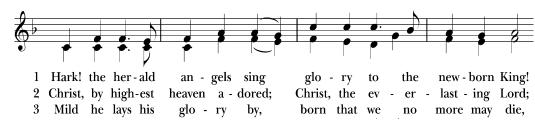
Holy God, make us whole. Amen.

Offering While tonight's worship is online and inside this beautiful sanctuary, the ministries of St. Paul's are at work in our community and in the world throughout the year. Our lay ministry teams feed and clothe those in need through our food pantry and clothing bank, shelter homeless families four times a year through the Family Promise program, warmly welcome addiction support groups to meet within our building, and affirm any person exploring a faith journey, whoever they are, just as they are. Please consider making a gift to support the work of these ministries. Thank you and God bless you, this Christmas and always. Note: If you would like to donate, you are welcome to place your gift in the offering plate, or if you would prefer to give via credit/debit card, simply text "give" to (603) 786-7126 and you will be prompted to enter an amount of your choice and your card number.

HOLY COMMUNION

THE OFFERTORY HYMN

Hark the Herald Angels Sing





OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Harp Carol

J. SANTORE

PRESENTATION PRAYER

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendor, and the majesty.

For everything in heaven and on earth is Yours.

All things come from you, O Lord,

And of Your own have we given back to You.

THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Hymn 380 v. 3

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER D

The Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts.

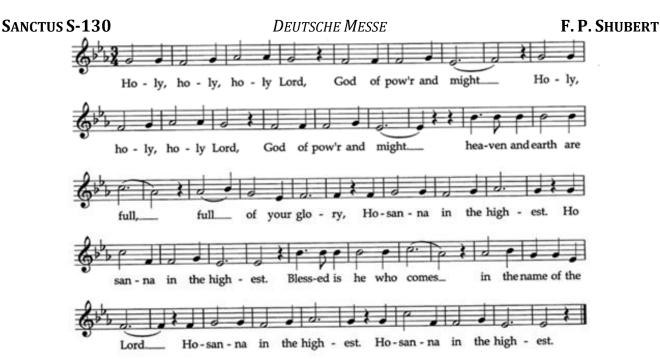
And also with you.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is truly right to glorify you, Father, and to give you thanks; for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and forever. Fountain of life and source of all goodness,

you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance. Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we sing,



The congregation may kneel, sit, or stand as able.

We acclaim you, holy Lord, glorious in power. Your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love. You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might rule and serve all your creatures. When our disobedience took us far from you, you did not abandon us to the power of death. In your mercy you came to our help, so that in seeking you we might find you. Again and again, you called us into covenant with you, and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation.

Divine Creator, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, he lived as one of us, yet without sin. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. To fulfill your purpose, he gave himself up to death; and rising from the grave, destroyed death, and made the whole creation new. And, that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and rose for us, he sent the Holy Spirit, his own first gift for those who believe, to complete his work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.

When the hour had come for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end; at supper with them he 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."

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand, awaiting his coming in glory; and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you.

We praise you; we bless you, we give thanks to you, and we pray to you, Lord our God.

Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us, and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name.

Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic Church, redeemed by the blood of your Christ. Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace. Remember Michael, our Presiding Bishop and Primate; Rob, our Bishop; and all who minister in your Church.

Remember all your people, and those who seek your truth. And grant that we may find our inheritance with the Blessed Mary and with Joseph, her spouse, with patriarchs, matriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with St. Paul and all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **AMEN**.

THE LORD'S PRAYER



INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Christ is the bread which has come down from heaven **Lord, give us this bread for ever.**

THE INVITATION

All who are seeking a closer union with God are welcome at the Lord's table. Everyone is invited to receive Holy Communion. Come down the center aisle to the communion rail. Please go to where there is a decal on the floor. Extend your hands and receive the consecrated host in your hand. The Eucharistic Minister will offer you the consecrated wine. Please take hold of the base of the chalice and bring the cup to your lips to sip of the wine. PLEASE DO NOT INTINCT (DUNK THE HOST INTO THE CUP). S/he will then wipe the cup. If you choose not to receive the wine, please cross your arms across your chest, and stay at the rail until the EM stands in front of you saying "The Blood of Christ, the Cup of Salvation."

If you choose not to receive either element of the Sacrament, we invite you to come forward to the rail to receive a blessing by crossing your arms in front of your chest.

Please let us know if you require a consecrated gluten-free wafer.

Gesu Bambino Christmas Lullaby In the Bleak Midwinter P. YON
J. RUTTER
G. HOLST

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray: Eternal God, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE CHRISTMAS BLESSING

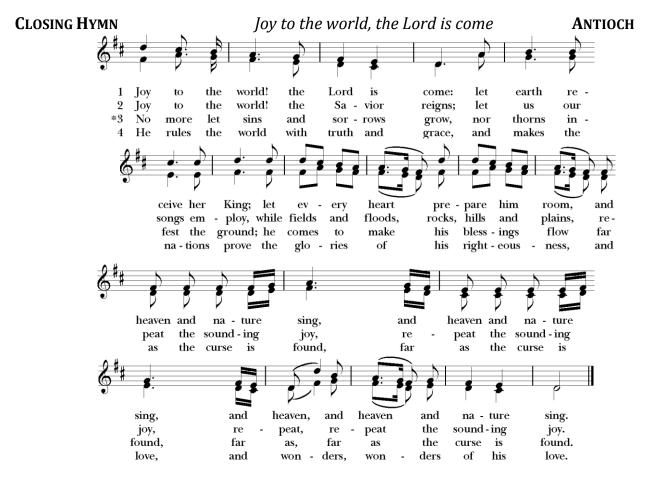
God sent the angels to shepherds to herald the great joy of our Savior's birth. May God fill you with joy and make you heralds of the gospel. **Amen.**

The Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary making her the God-bearer. May that same Spirit overshadow you and give you grace to bear God in our world. **Amen.**

When the Word became flesh, earth was joined to heaven.

May the Lord give you peace, good will, and fellowship with all the heavenly host. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, ... be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.



RESPONSE (please remain standing)

Hallelujah!

G. F. HANDEL

DISMISSAL

POSTLUDE (6:00 pm) (9:00 pm)

Rejoice Greatly Gloria in Excelsis Deo G.F. HANDEL A. VIVALDI

The Scripture translation is from the New Revised Standard Version Bible ©1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA and used with permission.

THE INTERIM RECTOR, RECTOR-ELECT, WARDENS, VESTRY AND STAFF WISH ALL OF YOU EVERY BLESSING THIS HAPPY AND HOLY CHRISTMASTIDE.

MAY THE HOLY CHILD OF BETHLEHEM FILL YOU WITH HIS HEALING LOVE AS YOU RECEIVE HIM INTO YOUR HEARTS.

Ministers Serving at Tonight's Services

Clergy Rev. Denis Brunelle, Interim Rector **Choir Director** John Spring

Piano and Organist Catharine Dornin, R.P. Hale

Lectors (6:00)Kim Wheeler, Bob Samson, Paul Smith
Chalice (6:00)
Kim Wheeler, Paul Smith, Linda Douglas

Acolyte (6:00) Jack Griffin

Ushers (6:00) John Cabibi, Theresa Neves, David Levesque, Joan Griffin **Person on Duty (6:00)** Tamar Roberts

Video (6:00)Tamar Roberts

Jim Webber

Lectors & Chalice (9:00)

Tamar Roberts, Jim Milliken

Acolyte (9:00)

Nick Hewey

Ushers (9:00) Bob Washburn, Harriet DeGreenia

Person on Duty (9:00)

Video (9:00)

Dave Cawley
Randy Roberts

Brass Quartet Musicians

William Papp, Trumpet Michael Sheehan, Trumpet Matt Miller, French Horn Joanne Martin, Baritone **Vocal Soloists**

Sarah Dickinson Andrew Livernois Jillian Spring

Altar and Worship Space Preparations

The Altar Guild Ministry of St. Paul's

Upcoming Christmas Services

Christmas Day Sunday, December 25th 10:00 am Service of Holy Eucharist with the Rev. Denis C. Brunelle, Interim Rector

Hours

Office: Monday – Thursday 8:30 am – 4:00 pm & Friday 8:30 am – 2:00 pm Food Pantry: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 10:00 am – Noon & Wednesday Noon – 2:00 pm Chapter Two Thrift Store: Monday – Thursday 10:00 am – Noon and the first Sunday of the month 9:00 -11:30 am (January 7)

Please note the Office & Outreach Center will be CLOSED on December 25 & 26 and January 1.

Contact Us

21 Centre Street, Concord, NH 03301 Phone: (603) 224-2523 www.stpaulsconcord.org Email: office@stpaulsconcord.org