



The Nativity of our Lord: Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025

4:30 p.m. Musical Prelude and Holy Eucharist

St. Luke's Episcopal Church
stlukesdurham.org 1737 Hillandale Road
919 286 2273 Durham NC 27705

Merry Christmas and welcome to all who gather to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are glad that you are here. You may follow the order of worship by using this bulletin. Hymns are found in the blue hymnal in the rack near your seat. The congregation will remain seated during special Christmas music preceding the Liturgy and stand for the processional hymn.

The Nativity of our Lord: Christmas Eve
December 24, 2025
4:30 p.m. Musical Prelude and Holy Eucharist

Prelude

Violin and Harp: What Child is This

English melody *Greensleeves*

Handbells: Carol of the Bells (Ukrainian carol) M. Leontovich, arr. Kerry Boyce
He is born, the holy child (18th-cent. French Carol) arr. Barbara B. Kinyon
Joy to the World (*Antioch*) George Frideric Handel, arr. Anna Laura Page

Congregational Carol 79 O little town of Bethlehem, stzs. 1, 2 & 5 *St. Louis*

Choir: Sussex Carol

trad. English, arr. Alan Riley Jones

Christians sing, Christians sing...

On Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring,
news of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should men on earth be so sad, since our Redeemer made us glad.

When from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty?

When sin departs before his grace, then life and health come in its place.

Angels and men with joy may sing, all for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night:

“Glory to God and peace to men, now and for evermore. Amen.”

– trad. English Carol

Congregational Carol 89 It came upon the midnight clear, stzs. 1 & 4 *Carol*

Choir: All my heart this night rejoices

Johann Georg Ebeling

All my heart this night rejoices as I hear, far and near, sweetest angel voices:
“Christ is born,” their choirs are singing, Till the air everywhere now with joy is
ringing.

Hark! A voice from yonder manger, soft and sweet, doth entreat,” Flee from woe
and danger!

Brethren, come! From all doth grieve you, you are freed; all you need I will surely
give you.”

– Paulus Gerhardt, transl. Catherine Winkworth

String Trio: Tomorrow shall be my dancing day

trad. English, arr. David Arcus

Choir: See amid the winter’s snow

John Goss

See amid the winter’s snow, born for us on earth below;
See the tender Lamb appears, promised from eternal years:
Hail, thou everblessed morn; hail, redemption’s happy dawn;
Sing through all Jerusalem, Christ is born in Bethlehem.
Sacred infant, all divine, what a tender love was thine,
Thus to come from highest bliss down to such a world as this:
Hail, thou everblessed morn; hail, redemption’s happy dawn;
Sing through all Jerusalem, Christ is born in Bethlehem.
Teach, O teach us, Holy Child, by thy face so meek and mild,
Teach us to resemble thee, in thy sweet humility:
Hail, thou everblessed morn; hail, redemption’s happy dawn;
Sing through all Jerusalem, Christ is born in Bethlehem.

– Edward Caswell

Violin and Harp: Ave Maria

Joh. Seb. Bach, adapt. Charles Gounod

Processional Hymn 83 O come, all ye faithful

Adeste fidelis

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Tonight we light the final candle — the **Christ Candle** — placed at the center of the wreath. All our waiting and longing find their home here. The light that began as a small flame of hope now shines with the fullness of love. In Jesus, the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us — God with us, here and now, in the ordinary beauty of our lives. As this light fills the circle, we remember that Christ’s presence is not a moment in history but a living reality — the light that no darkness can overcome.

The Word of God

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

People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

Collect for Purity:

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 worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Gloria Angels we have heard on high (verses 1 and 3)

Gloria

Angels we have heard on high, singing sweetly through the night,

And the mountains in reply echoing their brave delight. *Gloria...*

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;

Come, adore on bended knee, Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. *Gloria...*

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant 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.*

The Lessons

Reader: A reading from the Prophet 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.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 96 *Cantate Domino*

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

2 **Sing and bless God's holy Name; ***
proclaim the good news of salvation from day to day.

3 Declare God's glory among the nations, *
God's wonders among all peoples.

4 **For God is great and greatly to be praised, ***
more to be feared than all gods.

- 5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols, *
but it is God who made the heavens.
- 6 Oh, the majesty and magnificence of God's presence! ***
Oh, the power and the splendor of God's sanctuary!
- 7 Ascribe to God, you families of the peoples, *
ascribe to God honor and power.
- 8 Ascribe due honor to God's holy Name; ***
bring offerings and come into God's courts.
- 9 Worship the Most High in the beauty of holiness; *
let the whole earth tremble before God.
- 10 Tell it out among the nations that God reigns! ***
God has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved
and 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 God, who will come, *
who will come to judge the earth.
- 13 God will judge the world with righteousness *
and the peoples with truth.

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The Epistle

Reader: A Reading from the letter to 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.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Sequence Hymn 94 While shepherds watched their flocks *Winchester Old*
(stanzas 1-3 before the reading of the Gospel; stanzas 4-6 after the reading)

The Gospel (*Please stand as you are able.*) (Luke 2:1-14)

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.
People **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!"

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Hymn 94, stanzas 4-6

The Sermon

The Rev. Greg Farrand

During the seasons of Advent and Christmas, instead of the Nicene Creed, we are joining our voices in the Affirmation of Faith from the Iona Community. Rooted in the language of justice, peace, and creation, this affirmation expresses the same ancient faith through contemporary words that call us to live what we believe. It reminds us that faith is not only something we confess but something we practice in the world.

Affirmation of Faith *(Please stand as you are able.)*

**We believe in God
who is older than eternity
and younger than our next breath;
who is beyond describing
yet knows us all by name;
who inspires faith,
yet cannot be contained by religion.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ,
flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone;
he came in the body to give worth to every human life.
He touched the untouchable,
loved the unlovable,
and endured slander, persecution and death.
But the third day he rose again,
to continue his work through us,
until the end of time.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit of God,
who longs within our souls for wholeness and peace,
who weeps with the broken and weary,
and empowers us for healing, reconciliation and hope.**

**We believe that God is with us,
before us, behind us, above us and within us.
We rejoice that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God,
made known in Christ Jesus, our Lord.
Amen.**

(from the Iona Community)

The Prayers of the People

Please stand or kneel as you are able.

Intercessor: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

As we remember the birth of Jesus—God choosing nearness over distance, vulnerability over power—let us open our hearts again to receive the Christ who comes among us.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

For the peace that comes from God’s healing love, for the mercy that restores and transforms, and for the salvation and wholeness of all creation.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

For the holy Church of God, that it may be shaped more by love than fear, more by truth than control, and more by compassion than judgment, and be found faithful to the way of Christ in a world aching for hope.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

For Presiding Bishop Sean, for our bishops Sam and Jennifer, for our rector Greg, for Father Medina, vicar of Iglesia El Buen Pastor, for our deacon Monnie, and for all who serve the Church in leadership and care.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

For peace in the world, and for an end to violence and war— that swords may be set aside and the dignity of every human life honored.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

For the poor and the unhoused, the sick and the suffering, the persecuted and the forgotten; for refugees and prisoners, and for all who live in fear or danger, that they may know protection, relief, and hope.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

For a deeper awakening to the truth that every person is made in the image of God and loved more than they ever dared imagine.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

For all who have asked for our prayers; for those we carry in our hearts, those named on our parish prayer list, and those known only to you; that they may be freed from anxiety and held in joy, peace, and healing.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

For those who have died in the hope of your resurrection; that they may rest where sorrow and pain are no more, and life is made whole.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

The People may add their own petitions.

Concluding Collect

BCP 395

O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Please stand as you are able for the Peace.

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Please be seated.

Announcements

Offertory Sentence

The Holy Communion

Offertory Anthem: An Americas Christmas 16th-cent. French folk melody and
Trad. Venezuelan villancico, arr. David Arcus

‘Twas in the moon of wintertime, when all the birds had fled,
That mighty Gitchi Manitou sent angelchoirs instead;
Before their light the stars grew dim, and wondering hunters heard the hymn:

Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.

Within a lodge of broken bark the tender babe was found;

A ragged robe of rabbit skin enwrapped his beauty round;
 But as the hunter braves drew nigh, the angelsong rang loud and high:
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.
 O Children of the forest free, the angelsong is true;
 The holy child of earth and heaven is born today for you.
 Come kneel before the radiant boy who brings you beauty, peace, and joy.
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.

-- English text by Jesse Edgar Middleton, based on Jean de Brébeuf

<i>Nino lindo,</i>	(Beautiful child,)
<i>Ante ti me rindo,</i>	(To you I surrender,)
<i>Eres tu mi Dios.</i>	(You are my God.)
<i>Esa tu hermosura;</i>	(That beauty of yours;)
<i>Ese tu candor,</i>	(That is your candor;)
<i>El alma me roba,</i>	(My soul robs me,)
<i>Me roba el amor.</i>	(Love robs me.)

– trad. Venezuelan

The Great Thanksgiving: Eucharistic Prayer A

BCP p. 361

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

Celebrant It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Here a Proper Preface is said.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever say this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
 san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
 san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Setting from *A Community Mass*; Richard Proulx (1937-2010)

Then the Celebrant continues

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, 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 we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Celebrant and People:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

The Celebrant continues

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your son Jesus Christ. 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:

People and Celebrant

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.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated bread.

Celebrant Be known to us, Lord Jesus,
People **in the breaking of the bread.**

Sharing of the Bread and Wine

Please make your way forward for communion. If you are unable to come forward, signal to the clergy, or let another worshipper know, and communion will be brought to you.

A minister is available at the railing of the side (candle) chapel to offer prayers for healing. If you would like these personal prayers offered for you, please go to the chapel after receiving communion. You may choose to share the reason you are requesting these prayers, or not, as you prefer.

Music during Communion

Harp: I wonder as I wander

John Jacob Niles

Choir and strings: In the bleak midwinter

Harold Darke

(The text may be found at hymn 112. Stanza three is replaced as follows:)

Enough for Him, whom cherubim worship night and day,
A breast full of milk, and a mangerful of hay,
Enough for Him, whom angels fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel, which adore.

– Christina Rossetti

Prayer for Those Worshipping at Home

Celebrant

Loving God, we also pray for those joining us in worship from home. Though they cannot share this bread and wine in person, we thank you that your Spirit joins us as one body in Christ. Bless them with your grace and presence, that they also may be strengthened to serve you in love. **Amen.**

Prayer for Eucharistic Visitors

(If there is a commissioning of a eucharistic visitor, the following will be said by the celebrant and congregation.)

Celebrant

In the name of this congregation, we send you forth bearing these holy gifts, that those to whom you go may share with us in the communion of Christ's body and blood.

Congregation

May you carry the prayers of all of us as you take this sacrament of Christ's presence.

Postcommunion Prayer *(Please stand as you are able.)*

BCP 365

**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.**

Post-Communion Hymn 111 (*remain seated*)

Silent Night

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.

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

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.

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.

Blessing

Closing Hymn 87 Hark! the herald angels sing

Mendelssohn

Dismissal

People: Thanks be to God!

Organ Postlude: Prelude in B major, Op. 7, No. 1-i

Marcel Dupré

This Evening's Worship Leaders

Presider and Preacher: The Rev. Greg Farrand
The Rev. Monnie Riggin, Deacon
Advent Wreath Lighting: Carrie and Monnie Riggin
Crucifer-acolyte: Randy Griffin
Torch Bearers: Samyra Medina, Samantha Medina
Reader: Jan Freeman
Intercessor: Carlton Brown
LEM Chalice: Kelly Lawton
LEM Host: Donald Hamm
Organist and Choir Director: David Arcus
Handbell Choir Director: Kaye Saunders
Healing: Mark Karengin
Livestream: Bill Gutknecht
Ushers: Beth Bonner

Vocal Soloists:

Wendy Cook, *soprano*
Carlton Brown, *baritone*

Guest Instrumentalists:

Ann Borden, *harp*
Ehsan Samei, *flute*
Cathy Rimer-Surles, *violin*
Naomi Tisdale, *viola*
Rachel Evans, *cello*

Our Music This Evening

We are grateful to be able to gather and celebrate the birth of Christ through choral and instrumental music and the singing of congregational carols. Many thanks to all the wonderful musicians who are sharing their talents with us this evening. We hope you will join in heartily on the singing of tonight's carols.

May you be blessed by the music in this evening's celebration of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**This Sunday's Adult Forum:
The Beautiful Contradictions of the Gospel Birth Narratives
Johnson Hall
December 28, 9:00-10:00**

When we imagine “the Christmas story,” we usually blend Matthew and Luke together into one seamless narrative. But the truth is that the New Testament gives us two very different birth stories—and when we place them side by side, the contradictions are striking.

This Sunday we'll explore why these differences are not mistakes to fix, but theological treasures. Each Gospel writer shapes the birth of Jesus in a way that speaks to the hopes, fears, and struggles of their particular community.

Matthew presents Jesus as the new Moses, fulfilling Israel's story.

Luke proclaims Jesus as Savior for the poor, the marginalized, and the whole world.

By looking closely at where the stories diverge—where the Holy Family lives, why they go to Bethlehem, who visits Jesus, how the genealogy works—we discover that the Gospels are not modern biographies but theological portraits. They invite us into meaning, not literal chronology.

Come learn why these contradictions are not problems to solve but windows into the depth, beauty, and mystery of the Incarnation—revealing a God who draws near in ways far richer than a single story could contain.

Parish Office Holiday Hours
The office will be closed:
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
December 29 and 30
New Year's Eve and New Year's Day

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St. Luke's Parish Office Hours:

Mondays-Thursdays 9-3

(closed Tuesdays from 10-11:15)

Rector Office Hours:

Mondays-Wednesdays 9-5

Thursdays available by phone

Other times by appointment