



Christmastide

Lessons and Carols

December 31, 2023 | 10:30 AM



All are welcome at Saint John's regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, age, gender expression or identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, socioeconomic position, immigration path, or faith journey. We believe that a diverse and inclusive congregation benefits all, and that we grow when we listen to and learn from those who are different from us. Scripture teaches us to do good and seek justice, and we invite you to join us in striving for a just world. We are committed to continuing the work of anti-racism, social and economic justice, and environmental care. We look forward to learning from one another and growing together on this journey of faith, grace, and love.

Jesus said: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Guests are welcome. We are pleased you are worshiping with us today. So that we may be in contact with you, we invite you to sign the guest book in the narthex. Our programs are open to all and you are invited to participate. We hope you will worship with us again soon.

Children are welcome. We encourage them to attend worship with their parents—even their noise and restlessness are surely a delight to God. Children's bulletins are available.

To assist you during worship: Large print worship bulletins are available from the ushers. Please inform an usher if you would like the pastor to commune you at your pew.

Offerings: St. John's is a tithing church. We dedicate a percentage of our offerings to the mission of the wider church through the NJ Synod of the ELCA and to many other mission partners. We are able to support these ministries because of your offerings and tithes.

Assisted Listening: To access assisted listening, Connect to the StJohnsALS WiFi network. Download the free WaveCast app to your phone. Tap ST_JOHNS_ALS to connect.



Ministers: The People of Saint John's

Clergy & Staff

The Rev. Blake A. Scalet, Pastor
Christopher Harlow-Jennings, Director of Music
Carolyn Rothman, Church Administrator
Jama Bowman, Communications Coordinator
Deacon Linda Walker, Minister of Children's Faith Formation
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We're delighted you're worshiping with us. As part of our ongoing outreach, your voice and your image may be videographed and photographed and used by St. John's for ministry purposes. For any questions or concerns, contact the church office.



PRELUDE In Dulci Jubilo

Johann Michael Bach

WELCOME

Please stand.

GATHERING HYMN ELW 269 Once in Royal David's City

1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and Lord of all,
3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;
4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,

where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:
and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;
for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;
we shall see him; but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;

Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
with the poor and meek and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.
there his chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo - ry crowned.



BIDDING PRAYER

Beloved in Christ, in this Christmastide, let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, and the babe lying in a manger. Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious redemption brought us by this holy child; and let us make this place glad with our carols of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace and justice on earth; and for the unity and mission of the Church for which he died, and especially in this, our own community. And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus Christ, we forevermore are one. These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven.

The Almighty God bless us with his grace; Christ give us the joys of everlasting life; and to the fellowship of the citizens above, may the King of Angels bring us all. **Amen.**



Please be seated.

FIRST LESSON Micah 5:2–5a

The king will come from Bethlehem

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; ⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

CAROL ELW 279 O Little Town of Bethlehem

FOREST GREEN



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won-d'ring love.
So God im-parts to hu - man hearts the bless-ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ-mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893

Music: FOREST GREEN, English folk tune

SECOND LESSON Matthew 1:18–25

The Birth of Jesus

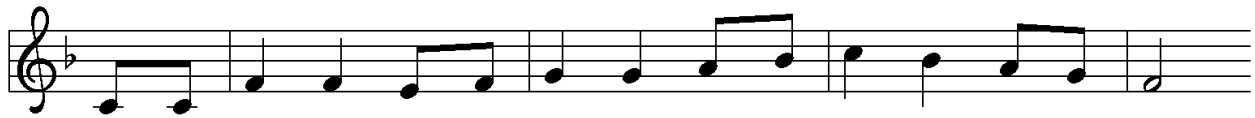
¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But 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. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”
which means, “God is with us.”²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

CAROL ELW 276 Infant Holy, Infant Lowly



1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, an - gels sing - ing, bells are ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing:
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885–1933, alt.
Music: W ZŁOBIE LEŻY, Polish carol

THIRD LESSON Luke 2:21–35*Jesus receives his name*

²¹After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed — and a sword will pierce your own soul too.

CAROL ELW 272 Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
 2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
 3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the
 4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man



sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
 mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
 air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
 woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who



seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
 vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
 dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
 dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to



mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
 bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
 sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.
 the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

FOURTH LESSON Matthew 2:1–12*Visit of the Magi*

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, “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.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶“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.””

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

CAROL ELW 284 ‘Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

1 'Twas in the moon of win - ter - time when all the birds had fled, that
2 With - in a lodge of bro - ken bark the ten - der babe was found; a
3 The ear - liest moon of win - ter - time is not so round and fair as
4 O chil - dren of the for - est free, the an - gel - song is true; the



*God the Lord of all the earth sent an - gel choirs in - stead; be -
rag - ged robe of rab - bit skin en - wrapped his beau - ty round; but
was the ring of glo - ry on the help - less in - fant there. The
ho - ly child of earth and heav'n is born to - day for you. Come,



fore their light the stars grew dim, and wan - d'ring hunt - ers heard the hymn:
as the hunt - er braves drew nigh, the an - gel song rang loud and high:
chiefs from far be - fore him knelt with gifts of fox and bea - ver pelt.
kneel be - fore the ra - diant boy, who brings you beau - ty, peace, and joy.



Je - sus your king is born! Je - sus is born, in ex - cel - sis glo - ri - a!

FIFTH LESSON Matthew 2:13–21

Flight into Egypt & Slaughter of the Holy Innocents

¹³Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” ¹⁴Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

¹⁶When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸”A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

¹⁹When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead. ²¹Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.

Please stand.

CAROL ACS 908 In a Far-Off Place, Jesus Comes



1 In a far - off place, Je - sus comes to earth.
2 For the poor in heart, Je - sus comes to earth.
3 In our deep - est night, Je - sus comes to earth:



Sheep and cat - tle grace the site. As the
Hum - ble shep - herds start the news. For the
ra - diant star to light our way. Sum - mer’s



an - gel songs be - gin, like the whis - per of the wind,
home-less in - fant born, for the meek and those who mourn,
heat or win - ter’s chill, with a warm and lov - ing will,



na - ture’s hope a - wakes a - gain; Je - sus comes.
for the wear - y and the worn, Je - sus comes.
to a world that needs him still, Je - sus comes.

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953
Music: TENTH NIGHT, Sally Ann Morris, b. 1952
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SIXTH LESSON John 1:1-14

The mystery of the incarnation

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And 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.

CAROL ELW 296 What Child Is This



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898
Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

COLLECT

Let us pray. Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

Please be seated.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR MISSION

GATHERING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

We present offerings for God's mission in the world through this congregation. Both visitors and members alike may use the pew envelope to make a contribution. If you would like to make a one-time or recurring electronic contribution, you may visit www.stjohnssummit.org or scan this code.



Please stand.

OFFERING HYMN ELW 294 In the Bleak Midwinter



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor earth sus - tain;
3 What . . . can I give him, poor as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;
If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830–1894
Music: CRANHAM, Gustav Holst, 1874–1934

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. **Gracious God, your Word-made-flesh brings harmony to the earth. As we offer ourselves and these your gifts, prepare us to receive the grace and truth you offer at this table and renew in us the song of your salvation, in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some slurs and ties. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with some words in bold (right, to give our thanks and praise).

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise . . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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

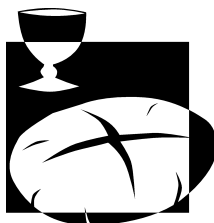
The image shows five staves of musical notation in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some slurs and ties. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with some words in bold (right, to give our thanks and praise).

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray with confidence in the words our Savior gave us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.



Please be seated.

RECEPTION OF COMMUNION

If you wish to receive communion, please approach the pastor one at a time.

The pastor will place a wafer in your open hands. Please indicate if you need a gluten free wafer.

Wine is served from the chalice—either by intinction or drinking from the common cup.

Wine and grape juice are available in pre-filled individual cups.

All baptized Christians are welcome at the Lord's table.

If you do not wish to commune, you may come forward for a blessing.

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMN ELW 298 The Bells of Christmas

Det ki - mer nu til ju - le - fest, det ki - mer

1 The bells of Christ - mas chime once more; the heav'n - ly
 2 This world, though wide and far out - spread, could scarce - ly
 3 Now let us go with qui - et mind, the swad - dled
 4 Oh, join with me, in glad - ness sing, to keep our

for den høj - e gæst, som steg til la - ve
 guest is at the door. He comes to earth - ly
 find for you a bed. Your cra - dle was a
 babe with shep - herds find, to gaze on him who
 Christ - mas with our king, un - til our song, from

hyt - ter ned med nyt - års - ga - ver: fryd og fred.
 dwell - ings still with new year gifts of peace, good will.
 man - ger stall, no pearl nor silk nor king - ly hall.
 glad - dens them, the love - liest flow'r of Jes - se's stem.
 lov - ing souls, like rush - ing might - y wa - ter rolls!

- 5 O patriarchs' Joy, O prophets' Song,
 O Dayspring bright, awaited long,
 O Son of Man, incarnate Word,
 great David's Son, great David's Lord:
- 6 Come, Jesus, glorious heav'nly guest,
 and keep your Christmas in our breast;
 then David's harpstrings, hushed so long,
 shall swell our jubilee of song.

Please stand.

BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

COLLECTS

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of our salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only son, Jesus Christ: grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him, when he shall come to be our judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the ✝ Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**



*Let this be a sign to you:
in a manger you will find an infant
wrapped in swaddling clothes*

SENDING HYMN ELW 290 Go Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain

Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;

go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!

1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born;

Refrain

be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.
Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. The Word is made flesh and dwells among us.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE In Dir ist Freude, BWV 615

J.S. Bach