

A digital illustration of a nativity scene. In the foreground, Joseph, a man with a beard wearing a dark blue robe, stands on the left holding a long wooden staff. Mary, a woman with long brown hair wearing a dark blue robe and a white headscarf, is kneeling on the right, tending to a wooden manger. The manger contains a baby wrapped in a white cloth. The scene is set under a simple wooden stable structure with four pillars. Above the stable, a large, bright, multi-pointed star shines in a dark blue night sky filled with smaller stars. The background shows rolling hills under the starry sky.

Christmas Eve
December 24, 2023
8:00 PM

Welcome to our home!
We would love for you to join our family!



*The Lovely Poinsettias on
the Christmas Altar are
Given to the glory of God...*

In Loving Memory of:

- Rev. John & Doris Skinner, Stanley & Meeva Skinner, and Christian & Julia Friedrichsen by Janet & Tom Maxwell
- Inez Johnson by Kelli Johnson
- Tom and Brian Ketcham by Gary Ketcham
- Our dear parents: Archie & Catherine Bradley and J.W. & Mary Ridge by Patricia & Stephen Bradley
- Our parents and grandparents by Marlene & Van Odom
- Clifton Franklin by Diamond Franklin
- Fred Stanley, Jimmy Buffet, and Jodie Beth Swaringim by Sharon & John Champlin
- Emil & Marion Stratton, Emily Edwards, and David & Linda Edwards by Michael Stratton
- Marilyn Synnestvedt by Kaia & Tim Holder
- Cooper Cox, George & Betty Kapp, and C.V & Loretta Wilkinson by Nancy & D.I. Wilkinson
- Vonnie Honea by Betty & Tom Honea
- George & Audre Lynde and Cynthia & Gerry Haugland by Cornelia & Richard Haugland
- Our fathers: Paul Archer and Kenneth Sellers by Lora & Jerry Sellers

In Honor of:

- Cedric Johnson by Kelli Johnson
- Our children and grandchildren by Marlene & Van Odom
- Richard & Connie Haugland by Brita Cantrell
- Pat Wilcox and Malcolm McGuire by Katherine Coburn
- Rick & Chris Ewing by Pat & David Wilcox



We Gather

Prelude:

O come all ye faithful

Hymnal #83

Proclamation of the Birth of Christ

Celebrant: Countless thousands of years having passed since the creation of the world, from the time when in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; nearly three thousand years from the salvation of humankind, when the family of Noah was preserved from the flood; some nineteen centuries after the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, and made him father of the promise; fifteen hundred and ten years from the time when Moses led the people from their bondage in Egypt; a thousand years and thirty-two from David's anointing as king of the people of God; in the sixty-fifth prophetic week foreseen by Daniel; in the one hundred and ninety-third Olympiad; seven and a half centuries from the foundation of the city of Rome; at the mid-point of the reign of the Emperor Caesar Augustus, when the whole world was at peace; in the sixth and final age of the world: Desiring to sanctify creation by the means of his coming and his blessed presence, Jesus Christ the eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, nine months having passed as he grew in his mother's womb, was born of the Virgin Mary, and for our salvation was made man in Bethlehem of Judah. This is the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the manner of all flesh.

Processional Hymn: #87

Hark the herald angels sing

Please stand & sing.

Opening Acclamation

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

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

Collect For Purity

Celebrant: 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.**

Hymn: #89

It came upon the midnight clear

Collect of the Day

The collect prayer "collects" the themes from the various readings for the day.

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Let us pray. O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

We Hear God's Word

First Lesson: Isaiah 9:2-7

Please be seated.

Reader: A reading from the book of Isaiah.

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

People: **Thanks be to God**

Hymn: #96

Angels we have heard on high

Psalm 96

Reader: Sing to the LORD a new song;

People: **sing to the LORD, all the whole earth.**

Reader: Sing to the LORD and bless his Name;

People: **proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.**

Reader: Declare his glory among the nations

People: **and his wonders among all peoples.**

Reader: For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised;

People: **he is more to be feared than all gods.**

Reader: As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;

People: **but it is the LORD who made the heavens.**

Reader: Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence!

People: **Oh, the power and the splendor of his sanctuary!**

Reader: Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples;

People: **ascribe to the LORD honor and power.**

Reader: Ascribe to the LORD the honor due his Name;

People: **bring offerings and come into his courts.**

Reader: Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness;

People: **let the whole earth tremble before him.**

Reader: Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is King!"

People: **he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity."**

Reader: Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it;

People: **let the field be joyful and all that is therein.**

Reader: Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the LORD when he comes,
People: **when he comes to judge the earth.**
Reader: He will judge the world with righteousness
People: **and the peoples with his truth.**

Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14

Please be seated.

Reader: A Reading from the letter of Paul to Titus.
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: Alleluia, alleluia. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory.
People: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

Gradual Hymn: #79

O little town of Bethlehem

Gospel Reading: Luke: 2:1-20

Please stand as you are able.

Reader: 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!"

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. And 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.

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

We Pray

Nicene Creed

Please stand as you are able.

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 man. 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.

Prayers of the People

Form III; BCP p. 387

Please kneel, sit, or stand.

Reader: Father, we pray for your holy catholic Church; especially...

People: **St. Paul's, Clinton; Whirlwind Mission, Watonga; Diocese of Western Massachusetts; Diocese of Albany; The Church of Bangladesh. That we all may be one.**

Reader: Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

People: **That your Name may be glorified by all people.**

Reader: We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons, especially...

People: **Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Poulson, our Bishop; Chris & Tom, our clergy; Alex & Audrey, our wardens; vestry, delegates, all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God, that they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.**

Reader: We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world; for...

People: **Joe, our President; Kamala, our Vice-president; Josh, our Congressman; James & Markwayne, our Senators; Kevin, our Governor; and Marlon, our Mayor; that there may be justice and peace on the earth.**

Reader: Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

People: **That our works may find favor in your sight.**

Reader: Have compassion on all those who suffer from any grief or trouble; especially...

People: **The Johnson family, Ronnie, Mike, John, Geneva, Glenn, Rose, Karen, Paul, Tracey, Adriana, Fred, Stuart, John Paul, Michael, Joey, Nancy, Dale, Gary, Brittney, Thomas, Catheryne, Jennifer, Patricia, Cathy, Dustin, Paula, Phillip, Marlene, Taylor, those impacted by war and violence, all emergency responders, United States Military, and those whose suffering is known only to God. That they may be delivered from their distress.**

Reader: Give to the departed eternal rest;

People: **Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Reader: We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

People: **May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.**

Reader: Let us pray for our needs and those of others, either silently or aloud.

Silence. The People may add their own petitions.

Reader: We give thanks for all who are worshipping with us this evening, especially for those worshipping with us for the first time.

Celebrant: 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.**

Confession and Absolution

Please kneel, sit, or stand.

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

Silence is observed.

Celebrant & People: **Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Peace

Please stand as you are able.

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Greet one another in the name of Christ.

Hymn: #93

Angels from the realms of glory

Announcements, Birthdays & Anniversary Blessings

Please be seated.

Welcome to our guests today. If you are new to Grace for the first time or even if you have been here once or twice before, please fill out a visitor card and put it in the plate. We promise not to harass you, but we would like to include you on our weekly email broadcasts and other event notifications. Thank you for the blessing of your presence today.

Celebrant: Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. *Ephesians 5:2*

Offertory Anthem:

Still, Still, Still

Choir

Doxology: #380 v. 3

Please stand & sing as you are able.

We Share the Meal

Eucharistic Prayer A

Sursum Corda: #S-120

Please remain standing.

Celebrant *People*
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Celebrant *People*
Lift up your hearts. 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.

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds.

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.

Because you gave Jesus Christ, your only Son, to be born for us; who, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, was made perfect Man of the flesh of the Virgin Mary his mother; so that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin, and receive power to become your children.

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

Sanctus: #S-125

Please sit or kneel after the Sanctus.

Celebrant: † 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.

Celebrant: On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." † † †

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." † † †

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Celebrant & People: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Celebrant: 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.**

Lord's Prayer

Celebrant: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Celebrant & People: **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.**

Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Fraction Anthem: #S-161

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

At Grace Episcopal Church, all baptized persons are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Please tell the usher if you need communion brought to you at your seat. IF you wish to receive the bread only, hold your palms upward, consume the bread, and cross your arms over your chest when the chalice bearer approaches. Those who do not wish to receive Holy Communion are invited to come to the altar rail to receive a Blessing, indicate this by crossing your arms over your chest when the priest approaches.

Communion Music:

O Holy Night

Lora Sellers, soloist; Kaia Holder, cellist

We Go Into the World

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Celebrant & People:

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.

Christmas Blessing

Celebrant: May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of his holiness. **Amen.**

May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel. **Amen.**

May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Celebrant: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

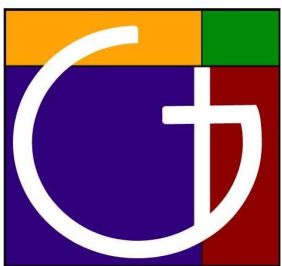
People: **Thanks be to God.**

Departing Procession: #111

Silent Night

After we finish singing Silent Night, please extinguish your candle. The choir will then exit and congregation will follow. Please give candles to the ushers on your way out of the church.





Grace Episcopal

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Ministers: All the People of God (BCP p. 855)

Priest in Charge: The Rev. Chris Cole

Sr. Warden: Alex Wilson

Jr. Warden: Audrey Stone

Deacon Emeritus: The Rev. Thomas A. Harrington

Organist/Choirmaster: Malcolm McGuire

Youth & Children's Director: Nancy Scott

