

**THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD:
CHRISTMAS DAY**

DECEMBER 25, 2020 • 10:30 A.M.



THE HOLY EUCHARIST

RITE II

WELCOME TO GOOD SHEPHERD

Whoever you are and wherever you're from, I'm glad you're here this morning. If you're visiting, I hope you'll come again. During COVID, Sunday services are at **8:00 a.m.** (a simple, outdoor communion service in traditional language) and **10:30 a.m.** (an elegant, livestreamed service with music – watch at gslive.org). If you would like to know more about Good Shepherd, please contact the church office (252-442-1134) and we'll be in touch.

When the Church of England was established, divisions between various factions threatened to draw the entire nation into darkness. On one side were the Puritans, who wanted to rid the church of all "Romish" doctrines and practices, while on the other there were those who believed that any church not in communion with the Pope was not a true church.

Perhaps the greatest gift to the people of England as they healed from years of this deadly religious conflict was the *Book of Common Prayer*. It didn't matter if one were a Puritan or a Papist, all could come together in the beauty of common prayer.

It is in that tradition that we gather tonight. As divisiveness in the nation and in the world tries to pull us apart, we come together with both kings and shepherds at the manger to join the angels in the beauty of their praises to the newborn king. And...

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the Kings and the Princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.

(Poem by Howard Thurman, 1899-1981, pastor and civil rights activist.)

Matt Johnson, *Rector*

THE WORD OF GOD

OPENING ACCLAMATION

The Book of Common Prayer, page 355

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

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

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS.....356

Presider and People

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY213

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

A moment of silence is observed.

Presider Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born [this day] of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and for ever.

People **Amen.**

Reader A Reading from the Letter of Paul to Titus.

⁴ When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. ⁶ This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Reader and People

¹ **The LORD is King;**

let the earth rejoice; *

let the multitude of the isles be glad.

² **Clouds and darkness are round about him, ***

righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne.

³ **A fire goes before him ***

and burns up his enemies on every side.

⁴ **His lightnings light up the world; ***

the earth sees it and is afraid.

⁵ **The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD, ***

at the presence of the LORD of the whole earth.

⁶ **The heavens declare his righteousness, ***

and all the peoples see his glory.

⁷ **Confounded be all who worship carved images**

and delight in false gods! *

Bow down before him, all you gods.

⁸ **Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, ***

because of your judgments, O LORD.

⁹ **For you are the LORD,**

most high over all the earth; *

you are exalted far above all gods.

¹⁰ **The LORD loves those who hate evil; ***

he preserves the lives of his saints

and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

¹¹ **Light has sprung up for the righteous, ***

and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted.

¹² **Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, ***

and give thanks to his holy Name.

Presider The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

¹ In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ 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. ⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ 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: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" ¹⁵ 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." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Presider The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

HOMILY

The Very Rev. Matthew Johnson

THE NICENE CREED358

Presider and People

**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.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Presider Let us bring to the Lord our hopes and cares this Christmastide.

Reader For God's people throughout the world, that we might do our part to give glory to God and to bring peace to the earth.

The People may add their own prayers either silently or aloud.

Presider God of Wonder,

People **Hear our prayers.**

Reader For those gathered here, that we might take the Good News of the living God into the world, not only with our lips, but in our lives.

The People may add their own prayers either silently or aloud.

Presider God of Joy,

People **Hear our prayers.**

Reader For all who are in darkness, and for all those in any need or trouble, that the light of the newborn Christ might fill their hearts and bring them hope.

The People may add their own prayers either silently or aloud.

Presider God of Hope,

People **Hear our prayers.**

Reader For the sick and the dying and those who care for them, that God might bless them this day with the gift of peace.

The People may add their own prayers either silently or aloud.

Presider God of Peace,

People **Hear our prayers.**

Presider Confident in God's love, we place our needs before the newborn Christ, whose manger is the human heart and whose glory is any person alive to his presence.

People **Amen.**

THE PEACE360

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

WELCOME

THE HOLY COMMUNION

THE OFFERTORY361

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Lift up your hearts.

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

Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

Presider It is our joy and delight to give you thanks and praise Emmanuel, God with us. We give you thanks and praise for your hallowing of human flesh. We rejoice at your light which shines out of darkness and enlightens all who seek you. We praise you that you brought forth new life in the family of Mary and Joseph as you do today from all who faithfully await the fulfillment of your word. We praise you that you were known first by poor shepherds and wise seekers as you are known today by the poor and outcast. We rejoice with the angels at your promise of peace for those who trust in you. We rejoice that the extraordinary is given birth in the ordinary places of life.

So with the angels who sing "Glory" and with all the saints and ancestors who have known you to be with us, we say together:

Presider and People

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Presider We bless you for Jesus, born of the Spirit's love and a woman's body and blood. We bless you for Jesus who shows us how to live the fullness of our humanity and thus become one with you. We remember Jesus who laughed and wept and felt tiredness and fear; who praised Mary when she anointed him for death and blessed a woman of the city who washed his feet with tears. We remember Jesus who touched lepers and the sick and feasted with tax collectors and sinners. We remember Christ who lives on in all who courageously and faithfully bring forth the light of your love in earth's darkest places.

We remember Jesus who, on the night before he died, shared a meal with his friends. He took bread, blessed it and broke it and gave it to them saying: "Take and eat. This is my own body given for you. Do this to remember me."

So we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Presider and People

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Presider O God, who is known to us in human flesh, send your Holy Spirit on us and on this bread, that it may be for us the body and blood of Christ, and we may be the body of Christ, food and life for the world. We ask these things through Christ, with whom and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit be glory now and forever.

People AMEN.

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

Presider and 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.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD364

After the Presider breaks the consecrated Bread, a moment of silence is observed.

Presider Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

ADMINISTRATION OF COMMUNION365

Please remain at your seat. *If you would like to receive communion, please hold out your hands when the Presider comes to you. As COVID precautions, the Presider will stand at a distance and use tongs to place a wafer on your palm, and the wine will not be administered. If you would prefer to receive a blessing rather than communion, simply fold your hands and the Presider will be happy to offer that instead (but without laying-on-of-hands).*

There are no age or membership requirements to receive communion: All are welcome to share in this sacred meal, which has been central to the Christian experience for over 2,000 years. In the words of an invitation from the Celtic tradition, "Come, you who have much faith and you who have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been here long, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come because it is the Lord who invites you."

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Enriching our Worship, page 69

Presider Let us pray.

A moment of silence is observed.

Presider and People

God of abundance, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of salvation; you have united us with Christ and one another; and you have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.

CHRISTMAS BLESSING

The Book of Occasional Services, page 23

Presider 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.

People **Amen.**

Presider 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.

People **Amen.**

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

People **Amen.**

Presider And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be among you and remain with you always.

People **Amen.**

THE DISMISSAL.....366

Presider Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People **Thanks be to God.**

**CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
AND DAY SCHOOL**

**231 N. Church St., Rocky Mount, NC 27804
www.goodshepherdrmt.org (252) 442-1134**

Sunday Services

8:00 a.m. (public, outdoor Eucharist)

10:30 a.m. (live stream at gslive.org)