

Church of Divine Love

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

CHRISTMAS EVE

DECEMBER 24, 2022 7:00 PM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer before Worship – on insert

Processional Hymn #

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 9:2-7**

Psalm 96

Second Lesson: **Titus 2:11-14**

Gradual Hymn #

Gospel: **Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:	
Eucharistic Prayer D	page 372
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 373
The Lord's Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn #	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn #	
Dismissal	

Sermon Saturday 24 and Sunday 25, 2022

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, [15-20].

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

“To you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Luke 2:1-14). That says it all. That’s the Christmas truth. It’s the only thing that needs to be said or really even can be said. And it’s the only thing I have to tell you today. Nothing more, nothing less.

They are the angel’s words to the shepherds. “To you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” They are words of “good news of great joy for all people.”

Isaiah’s prophecy (Isaiah 9:2-7) is fulfilled. “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.” Today, Gabriel’s words to Mary (Luke 1:26-38) come alive. They are flesh and blood real. Today “a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger” is our sign that “nothing will be impossible with God.” Every year I come to this day wanting only one thing. I want to be reminded of the angel’s words. I want to be cradled in the truth of those words. I want to hold them in the manger of my heart. I want to be told that the story is true and can be trusted. I want to know the reality of this birth in my life and in our world.

I suspect that’s what you want as well. I think that’s what we all want. We want to hear the angel’s words again for the very first time. I think that’s why we’ve come to this place on this day. Why do I say

that? Why do I come here every year wanting to hear those words one more time and be reminded of their truth? Why do I think that's why you're here and what you want? Because I have walked in darkness. Because I have lived in a land of deep darkness. Because I have known times when my life was draped by curtains of impossibility. Because I look at our world and ache to hear some good news of great joy, not just for me but for all people. And I think you know what I am talking about. I don't think your life and world are all that different from mine.

Let me give you a few examples. I have friends and loved ones who are walking in the darkness of cancer – waiting, wondering, weeping. I have lived in the dark land of grief, loss, and sorrow. The names and faces of family and friends run through my mind like tears down my cheeks. The darkness of confusion, self-doubt, and not knowing have caused me to stumble and fall. Sometimes my words and actions, my choices and priorities, things I have done and left undone, have darkened my soul and mind, leaving me blind to new possibilities and imprisoned by impossibility. Ukraine, Ferguson, Staten Island, assassinated police officers are just some of the patterns that cover my curtains of impossibility. And I don't know what to do with or about any of those.

I desperately want to hear good news of great joy for all people, for blacks and whites, liberals and conservatives, Muslims and Christians, Jews and Palestinians, citizens, and immigrants, gay and straight; and I want to see that good news overcome our divisions. I could go on and on, but I suspect you get it. You know what I am talking about, right? Maybe now you understand why I am here today, what I want, and why I want what I do. Those are not, however, my stories only. Change a few names and particulars and they are your stories too. They are the stories of all of us. They are as real for you as for me.

Every one of us has experienced some darkness over the last year. Every one of us has stood before a curtain of impossibility. Every one of us has longed to be told good news of great joy. And for some of us that wasn't just about the past year. It describes our life today; here, now, in this moment. That's why I come here today wanting to be reminded this story is real and true. That's why I said I think you come here wanting the same thing. And you know what? We've come to the right place. I never leave here disappointed. You will not leave here disappointed. The manger of Christ never disappoints. Every year I leave this day and this place having seen the "child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger" and once again, as if for the first time, I know this story is true. I always leave here knowing the reality of its truth for my life. Today, you and I will leave here knowing.

That the manger of darkness is filled with the Light of Life; that the manger of confusion and self-doubt is filled with the Wonderful Counselor; that the manger of weakness and impossibility cradles the Mighty God; that the manger of loneliness and orphanhood holds the Eternal Father; that the manger of chaos and conflict holds the Prince of Peace; that the manger of cruelty and violence is filled with the Most Gentle One; that the manger of guilt and regret is filled with the Merciful One; that the manger of fear and lostness is filled with the Good Shepherd; that the manger of hunger and poverty holds the Bread of Life; that the manger of thirst and desire holds the Cup of Salvation; and that the manger of our humanity now cradles God.

This day is unique and particular – the circumstances, people, places, happenings. There will be no other day like this day. This day something is being announced to you. This day something is being fulfilled in you. This day something is being born in you. This day something is being promised to you. This day something is being given to you. This day something is opening to you. This day light shines in the darkness. This day brings you the possibility of the impossible. This day something is broken and hurting

in you. This day amends needs to be made. This day something is lost. This day something in you is dying. This day something needs to be forgiven. This day something needs healing. This day changes every other day. This day God is with you. This day is your Christmas life.

Let's tend and pay attention to this day and this thing that has happened, whatever it might be. This thing that has happened is so much more than just the birth of Jesus. This thing that has happened is the beginning not the end of your story. This thing that has happened is calling and asking something of you. This thing that has happened is desiring and wanting you. This thing that has happened is the coming of life and a future. This thing that has happened is insisting love, peace, hope, forgiveness, mercy, generosity, healing, gentleness, reconciliation, compassion in each of your lives. And this thing that has happened is awaiting your response. This thing that has happened is your Christmas life.

Somehow that little manger in Bethlehem holds the creator of us all and by his manger you and I, every aspect of our lives, and all of creation are cradled in him. Today, the Creator is born and by his birth we, the created, are made anew, reborn, and recreated. I can't tell you how this happens. I don't know. I only know that it does happen. Year after year it happens. I've experienced it in my life, and I've seen it happen in the lives of others. The only thing I can tell you is this: "To you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." And that is good news of great joy for all people. And so, as Gabriel said so long ago to Joseph, let me now say the same to you, "Do not fear. For God is with you. Now... and always." Blessed Christmas! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! **AMEN.**

SATURDAY

CHRISTMAS EVE-THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

7:00 PM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

SUNDAY

CHRISTMAS DAY-THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

MONDAY 8:00 PM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

8:00 PM AA MEETING

SATURDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

SUNDAY

THE HOLY NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP OFF IN THE KITCHEN

	Today	Tomorrow
Eucharistic Minister	Deb Giordano	Jess Berbeck

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Give to all who suffer the refreshing waters of your compassion and healing. Make them dwell in the safety of your care even in the midst of all that troubles them. Especially we remember before you:

Grace Schinella	Harriet Capers	Bob Curley
John Mulligan	Arlene Goodenough	Celeste
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Gabriel
Barbara Stinson	Michael & Family	Warren
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Anthony
Mo (Rachael)	Bill Conklin Sr.	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Ciara	Robert Sweat	Aidan

Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.
People of Haiti	Christopher & Family	Julia
Mary & Family	People of Ukraine	Tim
Nathan Treadwell	Richard & Family	Art
Margaret	Lourdes S.	Elodie

Help us speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them.
Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen

Prayer before Worship

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it, the spirit of grace. Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn to be sung during the consecration:

Father I adore you,
Lay my life before you,
How I love you.

Repeat twice with second verse starting with Jesus
and third verse starting with Spirit.

Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn
but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So
mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that
all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince
of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominions
and glory, now and for ever. Amen