

Church of the divine love

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 29, 2024 10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #1

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung)

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3**

Psalm 147

Second Lesson: **Galatians 3:23-25, 4:4-7**

Gradual Hymn –

Gospel: **John 1:1-18**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

The 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 B	page 367
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 367
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	
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Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn #	
Dismissal	

Sermon Sunday December 29, 2024

Isaiah 61: 10-62:3; Psalm 147; Galatians 3:23-25; John 1: 1-18.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

What comes to mind when you think about the work of Christmas?

For most of us, I suspect, it's things like shopping, wrapping presents, decorating, cleaning the house, buying groceries and cooking Christmas dinner. It's getting ready for Santa and opening presents. It's getting to church or the computer on time for the start of the Christmas service. I know for some it's a lot of work just getting through these days. They're hard days of grief, sadness, depression. For some the work includes planning the liturgies and preparing sermons. And sometimes a lot of people worked hard making videos and ensuring that the technology worked. We do a lot of work leading up to and in anticipation of Christmas Eve.

And I wouldn't be a bit surprised if on Christmas Day, after the child has been born and after the dishes have been done, there's a collective sigh of relief that our Christmas work is done. But what if it's really

not? What if that's when the work of Christmas begins? Have you ever thought that maybe the work of Christmas is what it means and looks like for the Word to become flesh and live among us (John 1:14)? Maybe the Word becoming flesh and living among us is a momentary kind of thing, happening only in the moments when the work of Christmas, is being done. Maybe it's less about a particular person and more about a way of being and living with each other. I think most of us hear about the Word becoming flesh and living among us and we immediately assume it's about Jesus. I don't disagree with that. We see him enfleshing the Word of God throughout his life; enfleshing forgiveness, love, mercy, peace, gentleness, nonviolence, wisdom, compassion, generosity. That was his way of being and living.

So, yes, I do think the Word became flesh in Jesus. I just don't think it is unique or exclusive to Jesus, as if Jesus is the only one in whom the Word became or can become flesh. What about you and me? What about the Word becoming flesh in us? Maybe the Word can and is intended to become flesh in us to the same degree it was in Jesus. Maybe that happens every time we offer compassion or mercy, in every moment when we do the work of Christmas. Have you ever loved or forgiven another? Have you ever reached out to another with compassion or gentleness? Have you ever responded with nonviolence and peace? Have you ever fed the hungry or cared for the sick? Has someone else ever done those things to or for you?

If you answered yes to any one of those questions then you can also say, and once again the Word became flesh and lived among us. Graces our life's water with wine; Graces our troubled hearts with peace; Graces our thirst with living water; Graces our hunger with loaves and fish; Graces our paralyzed legs to stand up and walk; Graces our blindness with eyes that see; Graces our sins with forgiveness; Graces our prodigal trips to the distant country with a homecoming party; Graces our dead parts with new life; Graces our lives with life abundant. All that and more entered our lives when the Word became flesh and lived among us.... From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. Grace upon grace, gift upon gift. What does that look like in your life today? In what ways are you being gifted, graced? And what are you saying to Grace?

If you are arguing with Grace, offering protests, measuring your worthiness, looking for some way to pay back, feeling indebted, or otherwise saying no or making excuses for why you shouldn't accept the gift, then stop it. Just stop it. We can hear the echoes of the Genesis creation story. "In the beginning God said.... And there was..." light, sky, land, vegetation, living creatures from the water, birds of the air, living creatures from the earth, and humankind made in the divine image, according to the divine likeness (**Genesis 1:1-27**). John continues that great story of creation. In the gospel according to John it is as if God is saying, "Let us and humanity be one. Let us participate in each other's lives. Let the Word become flesh and live among humanity. Let humanity have the power to become my children, born not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God." And there was the incarnation.

The incarnation of God, the embodiment of God in human life, the Word become flesh, is not limited to Jesus. Jesus is the picture, the pattern, the archetype of what the Word become flesh looks like. And we look at that picture so that we can recognize it in ourselves and one another. We see Jesus enfleshing the

Word of God throughout his life. He enfleshes forgiveness, love, mercy, peace, gentleness, nonviolence, wisdom, compassion, generosity. He is our way, our truth, our life. He personifies who we are and who we can become. In today's gospel John speaks of becoming or coming into being five times. The Christmas story as told by John is not just a story of something God caused to happen. It is a story of God calling. It is God calling for the Word to become flesh. It is God insisting that God's Word be given existence in the uniqueness of each of our lives.

Everywhere we go the angels go with us announcing the coming of the image of God and reminding us of who we are. That is the truth of Christmas for us. It is also the Christmas truth for the person living next door, for those we love, for those we fear, for those who are like us and those who are different, for the stranger, and for our enemies. And the Word became flesh and lived among us. The implications are profound. It changes how we see ourselves and one another, the way we live, our actions, and our words. It means that Christmas cannot be limited to an event. Christmas is a life to be lived, a way of being. It means that Christmas is more properly understood as a verb rather than a noun. So maybe we should stop asking, how was your Christmas? Instead, we should be asking, how are you Christmassing? Are you recognizing the Word become flesh in your own life? Are you recognizing the Word become flesh in the lives of others? Do you see the procession of angels and hear their voices?

"And the Word became flesh and lived among us." The Word became flesh and has never ceased living among us. The Word became flesh and will never cease living among us. So, make way. Wherever you go. Whatever you are doing. Whoever you are with. Make way for the image of God. Christmas your way through life. Today's Gospel calls us to reflect on the astounding truth of the Word becoming flesh. As we embrace the incarnation, we are invited into a deeper relationship with Christ—one that reveals the divine in our daily lives. Let us remember that in our struggles, joys, and decisions, Christ walks with us, bringing grace and truth. May we, too, reflect the glory of God to the world, carrying the message of His unending grace and truth into every corner of our lives. **Amen.**

All baptized Christians, regardless of age, are welcome to receive communion in the Episcopal Church.

1 CHRISTMAS	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II
MONDAY	8:30 PM	AA MEETING
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP
	8:30 PM	AA MEETING

SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP
2 CHRISTMAS	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Dana Kenn	Anthony Giordano
Coffee Hour	Nolans	Jess Berbeck

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Loving God, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Especially we remember before you:

Sister Eddie	Betty Curley	Jess
Bob Curley	Steve Curley	Art
Chris Dickson	John Rocco	Deb P.
John Mulligan	Marjorie Guerrier	Lynette
Manetta Family	Robert Hosey	Ryan
Christopher	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Beverly Noel	Phil Ryder	Warren
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del

Donna A.	Kate Jones	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Ciara
Mary & Family	Wendy	Jan
Nathan Treadwell	Gladys Hadija	Vincent
Michael & Family	Matthew Treasure	Mo
Michelle & Baby	Joseph	Annie
Jerry& Family	Shannon & Family	

All people and countries suffering from violence, hatred and natural disaster.

The homeless and food insecure.

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.

To add or make changes to prayer list during the week, email

Janet Croft at jmc220@optonline.net.

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

