



St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

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The Celebration of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ

December 23, 2020

5:00 p.m.

Prelude

Silent Night

arr. Ray

The worship space is dark, or partially so, when the service is to begin.

The Officiant greets the people with these words.

Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it... The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. *John 1:1-5, 9*

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The candles at the Altar are now lighted, as are other candles and lamps as may be convenient.

Organ Voluntary

There's A Star in the East

Negro Spiritual

O Gracious Light *Phos hilaron (in unison)*

**O gracious light,
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!**

**Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

**You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of Life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.**

The Christmas Pageant

Solo	Once in royal David's city	Gauntlett
Scene I Luke 2:1-5	<i>Mary and Joseph journey to Jerusalem</i>	
Solo	O little town of Bethlehem	Redner
Scene II Luke 2:6-7	<i>Jesus is born in a stable in Bethlehem</i>	
Duet	Away in a manger	Cradle Song
Scene III Luke 2:8-14	<i>Shepherds are told by the angels of the Birth</i>	
Trio	Hark! The herald angels sing	Mendelssohn
Scene IV Luke 2:15-19	<i>Shepherds, angels, animals gather at the manger</i>	
Solo	Noel	
Scene V Matthew 2:1-2, 7-11	<i>The Wise Men visit</i>	
Trio	O Come, All Ye Faithful	Wade
Organ Voluntary	Angels We Have Heard on High	French Carol

The Apostles' Creed

Officiant and People together,

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The Prayers

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Officiant Let us pray.

Officiant 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.

That this evening may be holy, good, and peaceful,

We entreat you, O Lord.

That your holy angels may lead us in paths of peace and goodwill,

We entreat you, O Lord.

That we may be pardoned and forgiven for our sins and offenses,

We entreat you, O Lord.

That there may be peace to your Church and to the whole world,

We entreat you, O Lord.

That we may depart this life in your faith and fear,

and not be condemned before the great judgment seat of Christ,

We entreat you, O Lord.

That we may be bound together by your Holy Spirit in the communion of St. Thomas and all your saints, entrusting one another and all our life to Christ,
We entreat you, O Lord.

The Collect of the Day

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

The Song of Simeon *Nunc Dimittis (in unison)*

Luke 2:29-32

Lord, you now have set your servant free *
to go in peace as you have promised;
For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, *
whom you have prepared for all the world to see:
A Light to enlighten the nations, *
and the glory of your people Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Postlude

Joy to the World

arr. Ray

The poinsettias are given to the Glory of God
in loving memory of Bo Worthington by Janet Worthington
in loving memory of Sam and Mary Worthington by Janet Worthington
in loving memory of Bill Humphrey by Janet Worthington

Altar flower contributions were given by
Jamie A. Harmon in loving memory of Carolyn Phelps and Morgan Walker
Doug and Jill Sessoms in loving memory of his parents
Robert and Margaret Sessoms

The door wreaths are given by Taylor and Cathy Wilson to the Glory of God
and in loving memory of all our loved ones.

Thank you to everyone who provided lights and to all who spread the light of
Christ in the name of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church.

MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Officiant: The Rev. Bonnie Smith

Organist: Tom Parker

Altar: Cathy Wilson, Della Cherry, Rosanna Rhea

Lector: Hosea Wilson

Singers: Mike Spruill; Miriam Clarke; Emily and Ava Blanchard; Isabel Smith, Charlie Rascoe, and Mary Charles Perry; Ella Warren; Ivey Perry, Briar Rascoe, and Freeman Perry

Ushers: Bob Capehart, Bond Wilson, Hosea Wilson

Hostesses: Cathy Wilson, Nancy Joyner, and Clara Blanchard

Money Counters: Bob Capehart and Mike Spruill

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you for observing proper precautions for any gatherings during COVID-19: wear a mask, wash your hands, and wait 6 feet apart between households.

Under COVID-19 guidelines, the following changes must be made to our worship:

- Offering plates will not be passed. Please deposit your offering in the designated basket as you arrive or exit. Or you may mail your offering to St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, PO Box 400, Windsor, NC 27983.
- Congregational and choral singing are not permitted. A soloist is allowed, while physical distancing and wearing a face covering.
- Nursery care and children's Sunday School cannot be offered.
- No receptions or meals may be offered before or after worship.
- Please limit use of church restrooms.

Please take your printed bulletin home or drop it in the designated recycling container.

Small water bottles are available for your use.

The Festival of Lessons and Carols will be held Sunday, December 27 at 11:00 a.m.

You are invited to join the diocesan-wide "Journey through East Carolina" through February 7, 2021. Details are available at <https://www.ecdio.org/journey.html>