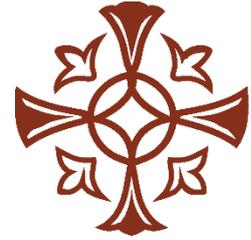


St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church
Worship Service
December 27, 2020 – Lessons & Carols



 **Opening Hymn**

Once in royal David's city (#102)

1. Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.
2. He came down to earth from heaven,
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor, the scorned, the lowly
lived on earth our Savior holy.
3. We, like Mary, rest confounded
that a stable should display
heaven's Word, the world's creator,
cradled there on Christmas Day,
yet this child, our Lord and brother,
brought us love for one another.
4. For he is our lifelong pattern;
daily, when on earth he grew;
he was tempted, scorned, rejected,
tears and smiles like us he knew.
Thus he feels for all our sadness,
and he shares in all our gladness.
5. And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child who seemed so helpless
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.
6. Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing round,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
where his saints his throne surround:
Christ, revealed to faithful eye,
set a God's right hand on high.

Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Dear People of God: In this Christmas Season, let it be our duty and delight to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger.

Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose from the time of our rebellion against him until the glorious redemption brought to us by his holy Child Jesus, and let us make this place glad with our carols of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world, for peace and justice on earth, for the unity and mission of the Church for which he died, and especially for his Church in our country and in this city.

And because he particularly loves them, let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and unloved, the aged and little children, as well as all those who do not know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and that whole multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in Jesus, we are one for evermore.

And now, to gather up all these petitions, let us pray in the words which Christ himself has taught us, saying:

***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 Almighty God bless us with his grace; Christ give us the joys of everlasting life; and to the fellowship of the citizens above, may the King of Angels bring us all. ***Amen.***

The Lessons

The First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

The prophet Isaiah foretells the birth of a Messiah, from the royal line of David, the Christ who will rule in peace without end.

A Reading from the Prophet 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.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



The First Carol

Rejoice! Rejoice, believers (68)

1 Rejoice! rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear!

The evening is advancing, and darker night is near.

The Bridegroom is arising, and soon he will draw nigh;

up, watch with expectation! at the midnight comes the cry.

2 See that your lamps are burning, replenish them with oil;
look now for your salvation, the end of sin and toil.

The marriage-feast is waiting, the gates wide open stand;

Rise up, ye heirs of glory, the Bridegroom is at hand!

3 Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;

Arise, thou Sun so longed for, above this darkened sphere!

With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see

the day of earth's redemption, and ever be with thee!.

The Second Reading

Luke 1:26-38

St. Luke tells how the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she is to give birth to a Son through the power of the Holy Spirit. And the child will be called holy, the Son of God.

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there

will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?*' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born* will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Second Carol The angel Gabriel from heaven came (#265)

1. The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favored lady," Gloria!
2. "For know a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honor thee,
thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favored lady," Gloria!
3. Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,
"my soul shall laud and magnify his holy Name."
Most highly favored lady, Gloria!
4. Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say--
"Most highly favored lady," Gloria!

The Third Reading

Luke 2:1-7

St. Luke tells how Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem to register their names on a census of the whole world. And, while they are there, Jesus is born and laid in a manger.

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

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.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Third Carol

Away in a manger (#101)

1. Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay;
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.
3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
close by me forever and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care;
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

The Fourth Reading

Luke 2:8-20

St. Luke tells how the angel of the Lord appears to shepherds tending their flocks in the fields. And the shepherds go to Bethlehem and find the baby lying in the manger.

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

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. But 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.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Fourth Carol

In the bleak midwinter (#112)

1. In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

3. Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

4. What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him--give my heart.

The Fifth Reading

Matthew 2:1-12

St. Matthew tells how the wise men travel from the east, following the light of a star. They bring gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the infant king.

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



The Fifth Carol

As with gladness men of old (#119)

1. As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold;
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright;
so, most gracious Lord, may we
evermore be led to Thee.

2. As with joyful steps they sped
to that lowly manger-bed;
there to bend the knee before
him whom heaven and earth adore;
so may we with willing feet
ever seek the mercy-seat.

3. As they offered gifts most rare
at that manger rude and bare;
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ! to thee, our heavenly King.

4. Holy Jesus! every day
keep us in the narrow way;
and, when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed lives at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds thy glory hide.

5. In the heavenly country bright,
need they no created light;
thou its light, its joy, its crown,
thou its sun which goes not down;
there forever may we sing
alleluias to our King.

The Sixth Reading

It's a birthday

A reading from the poem "It's a birthday" by Barnabas Children's Ministry.

It's a birthday, a birthday!
Who must we invite?
Neighbors, friends and family,
that surely must be right.
But 'no, not these' says God,
'I've someone else in mind:
the outsider and unrecognized,
the ones life leaves behind.
They'll be first to see
the baby come as God on earth,
and join in praise to me.'
Now I see that no one is
an outsider to our God.
Inside God's love, there's room for all
however strange and odd!

The Seventh Reading

John 1:1-18

A reading from the Gospel according to John.

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.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."') From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



The Sixth Carol

Love came down at Christmas (#84)

1 Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine;
love was born at Christmas: star and angels gave the sign.

2 Worship we the Godhead, love incarnate, love divine;
worship we our Jesus, but wherewith for sacred sign?

3 Love shall be our token; love be yours and love be mine;
love to God and neighbor, love for plea and gift and sign.

Blessing

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

When he came to us as a man, the Son of God scattered the darkness of this world, and filled this holy night with his glory. May the God of infinite goodness scatter the darkness of sin and brighten our hearts with holiness. **Amen.**

God sent his angels to shepherds to herald the great joy of our Savior's birth. May he fill us with joy and make us heralds of his gospel. **Amen.**

When the Word became flesh, earth was joined to heaven. May he give you his peace and good will, and fellowship with all the heavenly host. **Amen.**

And may the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, come down upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ, announcing the good news of Jesus' birth. **Thanks be to God.**



Closing Hymn

Joy to the world! The Lord is come (#100)

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come:

let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2. Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;

let us our songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,

nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,

and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and governmental and diocesan restrictions, the church is currently closed for in-person gatherings. Please contact us via email or phone.

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