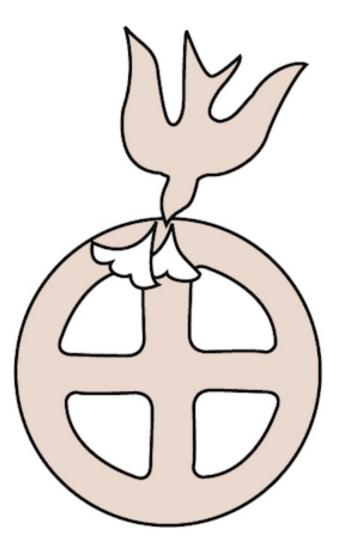
St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church



DECEMBER 25, 2023 Live Streamed on <u>YouTube</u>

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SPIRITUAL COMMUNION *

What happens when you are spiritually prepared and desire to receive communion, but can't? Such a case is referenced by a paragraph in the 1979 Prayer Book:

If a person desires to receive the Sacrament, but, by reason of extreme sickness or physical disability, is unable to eat and drink the Bread and Wine, the Celebrant is to assure that person that all the benefits of Communion are received, even though the Sacrament is not received with the mouth.

A nation-wide shut down due to a pandemic fits, I'm sure we'll agree, with the words "by any other impediment" listed in the first Prayer Book. Our Lord will not cut us off from his grace. If we truly desire him, he will come to us, even if we cannot receive the Sacraments he has instituted so that we may receive his grace. This is not a new idea. St Thomas Aquinas, writing nearly 800 years ago, said:

before receiving a sacrament, the reality of the sacrament can be had through the very desire of receiving the sacrament. Accordingly, before actual reception of this sacrament, a man can obtain salvation through the desire of receiving it, just as he can before Baptism through the desire of Baptism, as stated above (Summa, III.73.iii)

Desiring to receive the spiritual grace of the Most Holy Eucharist (and being prevented from receiving it sacramentally) is known as Spiritual Communion. It is so very important to note that this gift is given to us when we cannot, for very good reason, be present at mass.

When you are watching a live-stream or recording of our liturgies, any of the following prayers may be said at the moment of communion when you would normally leave your pew and make your journey to the altar:

In Union, dear Lord, with the faithful at every altar of Your Church where Your blessed Body and Blood are being offered to the Father, I desire to offer You praise and thanksgiving. I believe that You are present in the Holy Sacrament. And since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, I ask You to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to You, and embrace You with all the affections of my soul. Let me never be separated from You. Let me live and die in Your love. Amen.

OR

Faithful God, in the wonder of your wisdom and love, you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels, and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life. Though I cannot physically consume these gifts of bread and wine, I thank you that I have received the sacrament of Christ's presence, the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of Christ's passion. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may I embody your desire, and be renewed for your service, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen. (from Enriching Our Worship 2)

OR

"My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire you with all my heart. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already in my heart and unite myself to you completely. Please do not let me ever by separated from you." (by St. Alphonsus Liguori)

*Except where otherwise indicated, the whole of this article (with only very little amendment) is taken from the website of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where it was posted on April 5, 2020. No author was specified.

THE HOLY VIRTUAL EUCHARIST

The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ: Christmas Day

THE WORD OF GOD

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prelude

Once in Royal David's City

H. Gauntlett/ arr. Laura Page

Processional Hymn 100

Joy to the world!

ANTIOCH



OPENING ACCLAMATIONCelebrant:Alleluia. Unto us a child is born.People:O come let us adore him. Alleluia!

BCP 355

COLLECT FOR PURITY

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

GLORIA

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 DAY

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE FIRST READING

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.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people. Thanks be to God.

Psalm 96 (spoken)

- 1 Sing to the Lord a new song; * sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.
- 2 Sing to the Lord and bless his Name; * proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.
- 3 Declare his glory among the nations * and his wonders among all peoples.
- 4 For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; * he is more to be feared than all gods.
- 5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; * but it is the Lord who made the heavens.
- 6 Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence! *
- Oh, the power and the splendor of his sanctuary!
- 7 Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; * ascribe to the Lord honor and power.
- 8 Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his Name; * bring offerings and come into his courts.
- 9 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; * let the whole earth tremble before him.
- 10 Tell it out among the nations: "The Lord is King! *
- he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity."
- 11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.
- 12 Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord when he comes, * when he comes to judge the earth.
- 13 He will judge the world with righteousness * and the peoples with his truth.

THE SECOND READING

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Hear what the Spirit is saving to God's people. Thanks be to God.

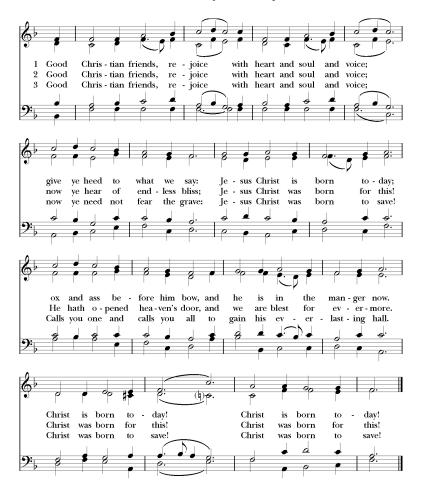
BCP 355

BCP 356

BCP 213

Isaiah 9:2-7

Luke 2:1-20



THE GOSPEL

Celebrant: People:

: The Holy Gospel of our Savior, Jesus Christ, according to Luke. Glory to you, O Christ.

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. 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 Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

The people are seated at the invitation of the preacher.

THE SERMON: The Rev. Nikki Mathis

THE NICENE CREED

(said by all)

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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE, Form VI

In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

For all people in their daily life and work;

For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

For this community, the nation, and the world; We pray for our President, Joseph, our Governor, Brian, and our Mayor, Kelly.

For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

For the just and proper use of your creation;

For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

For Michael, our Presiding Bishop, Rob, Paul, and Don, our Bishops; (...) and for all bishops and other ministers, priests, deacons, and clergy associates, especially Lin, Dutton, Carol, Ellen, Christina, & Nikki;

For all who serve God in his Church.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation. We pray especially for (...)

Hear us, Lord;

For your mercy is great.

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life. We give thanks for (...)

We will exalt you, O God our King;

And praise your Name for ever and ever.

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom. Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them; **Who put their trust in you.**

The Celebrant adds a Collect.

THE PEACECelebrant:The peace of Christ be always with you.People:And also with you.

BCP 358

BCP 392

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn 112

In the bleak midwinter

CRANHAM



THE GREAT THANKSGIVING, EUCHARISTIC PRAYER B The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you gave Jesus Christ, your only Son, to be born for us; who, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, was made perfect Man of the flesh of the Virgin Mary his mother; so that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin, and receive power to become your children.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

BCP 367

Celebrant 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.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People: We remember his death, We proclaim his resurrection, We await his coming in glory;

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. Amen.

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

Celebrant: Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; People: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

Communion Solo

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER

Enriching Our Worship 2 Faithful God, in the wonder of your wisdom and love, you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels, and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life. Though I cannot physically consume these gifts of bread and wine, I thank you that I have received the sacrament of Christ's presence, the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of Christ's passion. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may I embody your desire, and be renewed for your service, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER

Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

arr. Mark Hayes

BCP 366

BCP 364

Manger Medley

THE BLESSING

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. **Amen.**

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. Amen.

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

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

Recessional Hymn 99

Go tell it on the mountain

Negro Spiritual



THE DISMISSAL

Deacon:Let us go forth into the world rejoicing in the power of the Spirit. Alleluia, alleluia!People:Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!

Postlude

He is Born

Trad. French Carol/ arr. Laura Page

Prayers of the People

In our Parish we pray for Billy Hale, Kyra Madden, Eddie Bennett, Jim Klippel, Jackie Dorsey, Denise Glynn, Cecil Hudson, Jean Estes, Elmer Clark, Nancy Carter, Randy Harrelson, Teri Bouknecht, Kara Russe, Ellen Kappel, David Kirshenblatt, Cayden Mitchell, Bill Alworth, Stephen Morris, Barbara Johnson, Sue Bush, Janice Rusk, Jennifer Polzin, Susan Williams, Pat MacKinnon, Don Downie, Angie Defalco, Ken Packer, Michael, Rachel, Christy, Rosina, Eliot, Patricia, Ben, Scott, and Lynn.

In thanksgiving for those celebrating their birthday this week: Judith DeJoy, Brenda Browning, Kevan Lamm, Connor Green, and Talitha Stone; and for those celebrating anniversaries: Joe & Jane Sheridan, and George & Kris Braman.

The people listed here are prayed for by name at each Sunday service. To request prayer for yourself or someone else, please call the office (706-546-7553). If at the beginning of the next month the person needs to remain on the list, please call and give the office an update.

THIS/NEXT WEEK

PARISH OFFICES CLOSED | DEC. 26 & JAN. 1-2

Parish offices will be closed on Tuesday, Dec. 26 & next Monday, January 1 and Tuesday, January 2.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

Next Sunday, December 31, there will be services at 8AM and 10:30AM, but no Sunday school. Nursery will open at 10AM.

EPIPHANY LESSONS & CAROLS | SUNDAY, JAN. 7

Episcopal Church of the Advent in Madison invites you to participate in their annual Epiphany Lessons and Carols on Sunday, January 7th at 4:00 pm. Music will be provided by the Athens Chamber Singers. All are invited to the festive reception in the Parish House following the service.

In Memory of

Lief Carter, by Marilyn Vickers John Rives, by Diane Barret My Mother, Lucille West, by Jenifer Marquardt My sister, Carol Whitson, by Lois Alworth William & Evelyn Welch, by Shelby & Jeff Welch Dwayne & Thelma Coker, by Jeff & Shelby Welch Pauline Nicholls, by Pete Nicholls Sandra Everett, by the Lamm Family Rita Murphy, by the Lamm Family Mary Steinbauer, by Paula Sanford Denny Sanford, by Paula Sanford Terry Kelley, by Sheila Kelley Richard MacKinnon, by Sheila Kelley Jack & Iris Moorhead, by Sheila Kelley Roy & Jackie Kelley, by Sheila Kelley David McCranie, by Bernadine McCranie Victor & Bernadine Miller, by Bernadine McCranie Our son, Peter, by Tim & Christina Dondero Kathleen Davis, by Chrissy Moffett Ann & Jim Moffett, by Chrissy Moffett Elizabeth Hudock, by Chrissy Moffett Ann & Charles Davis, by Chrissy Moffett Dorothy Klippel, by Judith & David DeJoy Catherine DeJoy, by Judith & David DeJoy William Junming Yin, by Jonathan Klein Eric Agner, by Margaret Agner Wellesley Blackburn, by Diane Edison Mary Edison, by Diane Edison Domine Edison, by Diane Edison Susanne Burton, by Jon, Beth, Becca, and Parr Burton

In Thanksgiving for

My father, Wayne West, by Jenifer Marquardt Nathaniel, Jenny, Charlie, & Hayden Welch, by Jeff & Shelby Welch Toni & Wes Chapman, by Shelby & Jeff Welch Amelia, Caley, Jeffery, and Kitty, by Shelby & Jeff Welch The arrival of William Wesley Chapman, IV, by Jeff & Shelby Welch My husband, Tim, our daughters, sons-in-law, and grandchildren, by Christina Dondero William & Karen Klein, by Jonathan Klein

In honor of

Joe Napoli and his music ministry here at St. Gregory's, by Jonathan Klein

Those Who Serve

Vestry: LeeAnne Krause Reader: LeeAnne Krause EMs: David Stooksbury Crucifer: Grayson Krause Torches: Flowers: Flower Guild Altar Guild: David Lowe Ushers: Anna Hiers Livestream: Alec Nelson

Clergy and Staff

The Rev. Nikki Mathis Rector *rector@stgregoryathens.org* | 706-546-7553 x2

The Rev. Christina Dondero Deacon christinadondero@gmail.com | 404-918-7248

Kendall M. Kookogey Parish Administrator/Bookkeeper office@stgregoryathens.org | 706-546-7553 x1

Jonathan Klein Music Director/Organist *jonathanfk@gmail.com* | 706-296-8102

Joseph Napoli Choir Director awn1984@att.net | 706-546-6638

Wade McGlamery Youth Minister wwmcglamery@gmail.com | 770-624-4837

Jude Red-Bear Nursery Director juderedbear@icloud.com | 706-614-0008

Mark Hein Buildings/Grounds markehein@gmail.com | 706-549-3239

Terri Tillman WebMaster *ttillman@gmail.com*

Danielle Vogt Coffee Host danielle1784@gmail.com

Anthony Barkdoll Livestream Coordinator anthonybarkdoll@gmail.com

Peachy Green Clean Co-op Sexton

Nursery Attendants: Missy Hamlin, Jude Red Bear, Willem Swindler

Vestry Members: Kate Avinger, John Barrett; John Bray; Stacie Court; Gail Eilers; Anna Hiers; LeeAnne Krause, Sr. Warden; Lane Norton; Maggie Reinberger; Mark Richardson, Jr. Warden; Shelby Welch; Anna Thornton, Clerk; Les House, Treasurer

Vestry Person of the Day/Week: LeeAnne Krause leeanne.krause@verizon.net

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