

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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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.

OK

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.

Schedule of Services

Christmas Day
Monday, December 25

10AM Holy Eucharist & Carols *

Sunday, December 31
8AM Holy Eucharist
10:30AM Holy Eucharist *
(no Sunday school; nursery will open at 10AM)

* also live streamed



MUSIC PRELUDE

What Child Is This

English Carol arr. Cindy Blevins

Instrumental

Congregational Hymn 92

On this day earth shall ring

Personent hodie

Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring

J. S. Bach arr. C. Blevins

Choir Anthem Now Yield We Thanks and Praise Was frag' ich nach der Welt

Organ Solo Mendelssohn James Biery

Congregational Hymn 90 It came upon the midnight clear Noel

Instrumental In the bleak midwinter arr. C. Blevins

Congregation Hymn 78 O little town of Bethlehem Forest Green

Harp Solo

Still, still, still

Austrian Carol
arr. Yoland Kondonassis

Choir Anthem What is This Lovely Fragrance Gerald Near

Congregational Hymn 81 Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming Es ist ein Ros

Instrumental Sussex Carol Traditional English arr. Cindy Blevins

Choir Anthem The Shepherds' Lamb Dan Forrest



THE HOLY EUCHARIST

The Word of God

Music Prelude (see above)

Processional Hymn 83

O come, all ye faithful

ADESTE FIDELES



6 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be glory given; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;

Refrain

OPENING ACCLAMATION

Celebrant: Alleluia! Unto us a child is born.

People: O come let us adore him. Alleluia!



THE COLLECT FOR CHRISTMAS

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Let us pray.

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 FIRST READING Isaiah 9:2-7

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.

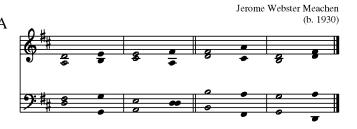
Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 96 Cantate Domino

- 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 be-/fore 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 there-/in.
- 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.





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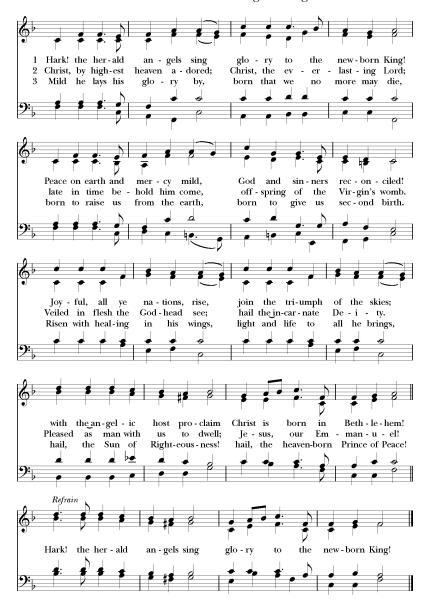
THE SECOND READING

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 saying to God's people. **Thanks be to God.**

The people stand to sing and remain standing for the Gospel.



THE GOSPEL Luke 2:1-20

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Savior, Jesus Christ, according to Luke.

People: 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.**

SERMON: The Rev. Nikki Mathis

THE NICENE CREED BCP 358

(said by all, standing)

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 III

BCP 387

Father, we pray for your holy catholic Church;

That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for all bishops, especially Michael, Rob, and Don, and all priests and deacons, especially Nikki, Christina, Carol, Ellen, Dutton, & Lin;

That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;

That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

That they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed eternal rest;

Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others. ...

We give special thanks for ...

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

THE PEACE

Celebrant: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: And also with you.

The Holy Communion

Offertory Anthem

Carol for a New Year

Howard Helvey

Ring out the old, ring in the new, Ring, happy bells across the snow;
The year is going, let him go; Ring out the false, ring in the true;
Ring out a slowly dying cause, And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life, with sweeter manners, purer laws;
Ring out old shapes of foul disease, Ring out the narr'wing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old, Ring in the thousand years of peace;
Ring in the valiant man and free, The larger heart, and kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land, Ring in the Christ that is to be;
Ring in the Christ!

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING, EUCHARISTIC PRAYER B

BCP 367

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.

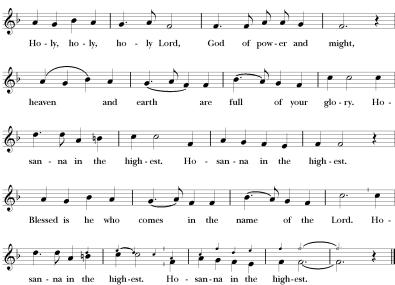
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

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:

Sanctus S-125





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 the Blessed Virgin Mary and 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**.

THE LORD'S PRAYER BCP 364

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us, as our Savior taught us, so we pray

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.

Fraction Anthem S-164

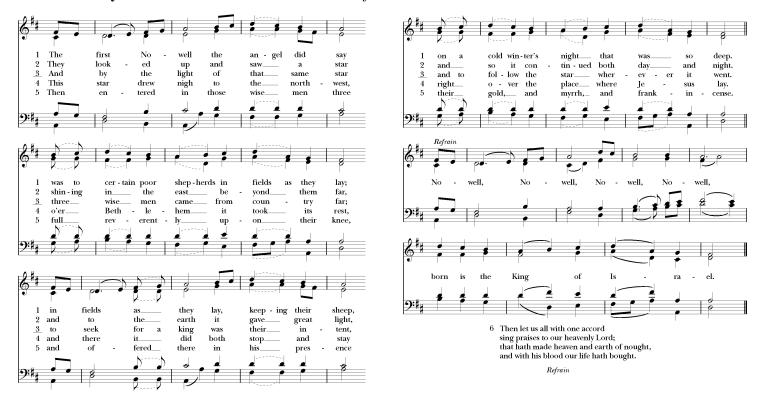


Franz Schubert

Communion Hymn 109

The first Nowell

THE FIRST NOWELL



SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER (for our livestreaming community)

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

BCP 366

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.



Individual candles are lit as the lights are dimmed; people are invited to kneel, if able.

Please pass your flame to your neighbor.



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.**



THE DISMISSAL

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

Postlude

In dulci jubilo

German Carol/arr. C. Blevins

Special thanks to Amanda Bateman, Kimmie Bateman, and Dylan Abbott for their music this evening!

THE FLOWERS ON THE CHRISTMAS ALTAR ARE GIVEN

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

SERVERS

Eucharistic Ministers: Jane Hudson & Ron Balthazor

Crucifer: David Stooksbury
Ushers: Mark & Ellen Richardson
Reader: Roger Schwenke

Altar Guild: Anna Thornton, Carol Flenniken, Lin Kromhout

Flower Guild: Flower Guild Live Stream: Pete Nicholls

The Rev. Nikki Mathis, Rector
The Rev. Christina Dondero, Deacon
Jonathan Klein, Organist & Director of Music
Joseph Napoli, Choir Director
Wade McGlamery, Coordinator of Youth Ministries
Kendall M. Kookogey, Parish Administrator
Mark Hein, Buildings & Grounds