

The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

December 24, 2021
5PM



St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church

www.stgregoryathens.org | 706.546.7553 | office@stgregoryathens.org

3195 Barnett Shoals Road, Athens, GA 30605

**VISION STATEMENT FOR
ST. GREGORY THE GREAT EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

*The vision of St. Gregory the Great is to be a program-sized, culturally integrated parish,
proclaiming and loving like Jesus with varied worship, music, and outdoor spaces.*

**DIOCESE OF ATLANTA STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
Adopted at Annual Council 2015**

*We challenge ourselves and the world to love like Jesus as we:
Worship Joyfully; Serve Compassionately, and Grow Spiritually.*

Dear Visitor,

Thank you for joining us today in the joyous celebration of the birth of the Christ!

If you are visiting in the area or already have a spiritual home, we send you back to your own congregation with our greetings and our blessings. Please sign our guestbook or fill out a pew card.

If you are looking for a place to know and celebrate God's love for all God's children, we invite you to return tomorrow, Christmas Day, for Holy Eucharist at 10AM and on regular Sundays at 8AM or 10:30AM, (our 10:30AM service is also livestreamed on YouTube) to worship with us and meet other members of St. Gregory's family. We are an inclusive community welcoming without barriers all who come to us. In addition to our regular worship services, we celebrate our life in God through study, fellowship, prayer and service to one another and the wider community. We would be delighted for you to consider becoming a member of our parish.

For further information about St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church, please call the church office at (706) 546-7553 or visit our website at www.stgregoryathens.org. **A blessed and merry Christmas to you!**

Christmas Eve

Friday, December 24

9:30PM Music Prelude

10PM Festival Eucharist & Choir

Christmas Day

Saturday, December 25

10AM Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 26

10AM Holy Eucharist

Sunday, January 2, 2022

8AM Holy Eucharist

10:30AM Holy Eucharist

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

The Word of God

Instrumental Prelude

What Child Is This

arr. Dorothy Wells

OPENING SENTENCE

Behold, I bring you good news of great joy for all the people: for to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord.

Opening Hymn 83

O come, all ye faithful

ADESTE FIDELES

BLESSING OF THE CRECHE

God our Father, on this night your Son Jesus Christ was born of Mary, for us and for our salvation. By being born as one of us and lying humbly in a manger, he shows us how much you love the world. Now bless this manger, which we have prepared to celebrate this holy birth; may all who see it be strengthened in faith and receive the fullness of life he came to bring, who is alive and reigns for ever. **Amen**

OPENING ACCLAMATION

Celebrant: Alleluia! Unto us a child is born.

People: **O come let us adore him. Alleluia!**

Song of Praise 107

Good Christian friends, rejoice

IN DULCI JUBILO

THE COLLECT FOR CHRISTMAS

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Eternal God, who made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of your one true light: bring us, who have known the revelation of that light on earth, to see the radiance of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Children's Christmas Pageant:

Godly Play: A Children's Liturgy for Christmas Eve

(Jerome Berryman, author)

The congregation will join the children in singing the verses printed in bold.

Introit :

Shalom Chaverim

This night is like no other night. It is a time to dream and sing our way to Bethlehem. The children will show us the way.

The little town we seek sits in the hill country some ten miles south of Jerusalem. For thousands of years the houses have gathered there on the hilltop like a family breaking bread. "Bethlehem" means "House of Bread."

In the center of the village is a small inn. On this night it is over-flowing with people seeking sleep and a place to eat. Behind the inn is a dark stable. A spotted cow chews her hay while a weary donkey leans and rests after the day's plowing in the valley. A sheep nearby is nearly asleep.

Hymn 79, v. 1

O little town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

As night gathers, the last two travelers come slowly up the road.

Look, there is a young woman about to be a mother. She is walking with her husband. They are Joseph and Mary from Nazareth! They have walked for six days to come to this city where King David was born, so long ago. They have come, like so many others, because the Roman emperor wants to count each one, so he can take their money as a tax.

But it is late, and Mary is so weary. Where will they sleep? There is no room in the inn. They decide to sleep with the animals.

Hymn 89 v. 1

It came upon the midnight clear

CAROL

**It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold;
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven’s all gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.**

Stars brighten slowly in the sky. All creation holds its breath. Suddenly, from the stable, comes the cry of a newborn child! Mary gently wraps the baby in a blanket, and lays him in the manger that his father has filled with straw.

Hymn 101, vs. 1 & 2

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed

CRADLE SONG

**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.**

**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.**

In the hills outside Bethlehem, shepherds watch their shadowy sheep.

All at once, the dark is lost in light, and in the midst of the light is something even brighter: the faces of angels.

The fearful shepherds then hear music in the sky, and a voice says clearly, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you glad news of a great joy, which will be for all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

Then more angels appear, a whole heavenly host of them, praising God and singing: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to all people, everywhere.”

“Gloria, Gloria, Gloria”
Gloria, gloria, gloria, glory to God on high!
Gloria, gloria, gloria, glory to God on high!
**And on earth be peace to the people
in whom God is well pleased!**
**And on earth be peace to the people
in whom God is well pleased!**

The shepherds run with joy across the fields to Bethlehem to the stable behind the inn. There they find the Holy Family and creep forward, overwhelmed with mystery, to find Nativity itself in the center of all that love.

Hymn 109, vs. 1 & 2

The first Nowell the angel did say

THE FIRST NOWELL

**The first Nowell the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields as they lay, keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.**

**They looked up and saw a star shining in the east beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.**

Camels plod up the road to Bethlehem. They have come from the East, far beyond the Arabian Desert, perhaps from as far as the Caspian Sea. The camels carry three kings, the wise ones, the Magi. They are following the wild star, the destiny they had never seen before, and they are following it, wherever it goes, to find the King its shining shows them.

Hymn 128, vs. 1 & 2

We three Kings of Orient are

THREE KINGS OF ORIENT

**We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.**

**O Star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright;
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**

**Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,
King for ever, ceasing never over us all to reign.**

**O Star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright;
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**

The kings' journey ends in a new kind of king. Their restlessness rests at last. They fall to their knees and give him bright gold, sweet-smelling frankincense and bitter myrrh, brought so far with so much love.

So now we all come, following the star, to find God-with-us. We come, as people have come all through the ages, to bring our own gifts to this Child, God's gift to us.

We bring our gifts of stars and ourselves to place around the manger. Show us the way into the Mystery of Christmas, as we sing, for this is the night to tell the world that Jesus Christ is born!

Hymn 99

Go tell it on the mountain

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

*Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.*

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. (refrain)**

**The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. (refrain)**

**Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. (refrain)**

PRAYERS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE

The Prayers of the Young People



We pray for the people of God's whole church.

We pray especially for the people of St. Gregory's Church, for our rector

Mother Nikki, and our deacon Mother Christina.



We pray for our presiding bishop Michael, and for our bishops Rob and Don.



We pray for the United States, and for our President Joe.



We pray for the other countries of the world and their leaders.
May they all work for peace.



We pray for this city of Athens, and for the people who
live and work and go to school here.



We pray for the other cities and towns and for the people who live in them.



We pray for the good earth which God has given us.
May we help to take care of the land, the air
and the water, and the plants and animals.



We pray for all people who are sick or sad or lonely or afraid.
May we always remember them and be kind.



We pray for all people who have died. May they have a place with you.
We thank you for your many blessings.



We pray especially for _____.

Lord, hear the prayers of your young people and strengthen all of us to do your will.

Amen



THE PEACE

Celebrant: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

The people greet one another with a sign of God's peace and then are seated.

The Holy Communion

Offertory Hymn 87

Hark! the herald angels sing

MENDELSSOHN

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-130

Holy, holy, holy

Franz Schubert

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and
might, _____ Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,
God of power and might, _____ hea - ven and earth are
full, _____ full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na
in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes _____
_____ in the name of the Lord. _____ Ho - san - na
in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

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

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.

Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, bear - er of our sins: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, re - deem - er, re - deem - er of the world:

give us your peace, give us your peace.

THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

Whoever you are and wherever you are in your journey of faith, know that you are welcome to join with us at God's table to share in the holy communion. If you would like to receive a blessing rather than the bread, cross your arms over your chest when the priest comes to you in the communion circle.

Communion Solo

Carol of the Bells

Mykola Leontovych

Communion Hymn 112

Charles Campbell, *piano*

CRANHAM

Communion Hymn 115

In the bleak midwinter

GREENSLEEVES

What child is this

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

BCP 365

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn 111

Silent night, holy night

STILLE NACHT

**Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace. Sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake, at the sight
Glory streams from heaven afar, Heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah.
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.**

**Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord at thy birth, Jesus, Lord at thy birth.**

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.**

Postcommunion Hymn 100

Joy to the world!

ANTIOCH

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!**



THE FLOWERS ON THE CHRISTMAS ALTAR ARE GIVEN

In Memory of

Dwayne & Thelma Coker, by Jeff & Shelby Welch
Bill & Evelyn Welch, by Jeff & Shelby Welch
John Rives, by Diane Barret
Mary Ellen Cherry, by Jenifer Marquardt
Paul Edmonston, by his wife, Elizabeth
Iris and Jack Moorhead, by Sheila Kelley
Jackie and Roy Kelley, by Sheila Kelley
Violeta Moore, by Sheila Kelley
Lucille West, by Jenifer Marquardt
Jack Beach, by Martha Beach
Conoly Hester
George Watson

In Thanksgiving for

Nathanial, Jenny, Charlie, and Hayden Welch, by Jeff & Shelby Welch
Toni and Wes Chapman, by Jeff & Shelby Welch
Amelia, Caley, Jeffery, & Kitty Ross, by Jeff & Shelby Welch
Our children and grandchildren, by John & Linda Barrett
My St. Gregory's Family, by Martha Beach
Robert Wright, by the Napoli Family

In Honor of

Evelyn Wright, by the Napoli family



CAST

Mary – Etrulia Christoffel

Joseph – Ethan Mathis

Star Bearer – Jonah Compton

Lead Angel – Lorraine Bjork

Angels – Ethan Vogt, Clare Boyle, Simone Coppins,
Theo Christoffel, Jeffery Welch

Shepherds – Rory Compton, Rainsly Vogt

Sheep - Reed Smith, Sadie Bray, Felix Bjork

Cat: Walker Welch

Magi – Simeon Bjork, Charles Campbell, Walker
Welch

Narrators — Sophia Coppin, Raymond Campbell,
Nessa Avinger

Prayers of the Young People - Porter Welch

BAND OF BELIEVERS

Cynthia Hoover, Rachel Hoover, Abby Hoover,
Julia Hoover, Gavin Avinger, Porter Welch,
Maggie Reinberger, Christina Dondero,
Jonathan Klein, Joel Hunt

The Rev. Nikki Mathis, Rector

The Rev. Christina Dondero, Deacon

Jonathan Klein, Organist & Director of Music

Joseph Napoli, Choir Director

Catherine Drewry, Director of Children's Ministries

Wade McGlamery, Coordinator of Youth Ministries

Kendall M. Kookogey, Parish Administrator

Mark Hein, Buildings & Grounds

Allena Armour, Sexton