++ Saint Matthew's ++ EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Holy Eucharist - Rite II The Fourth Sunday of Advent December 24, 2023 10:00 am

The Sound of Hope

We've been singing a sad song for quite some time, the melody syncing with our heartbeats, the lyrics stamped to the front of our minds. You say, *sad songs are honest*. It's hard to disagree, for sad songs tap us on the shoulder. Sad songs remind us of the 100 different corners heartbreak could be behind.

But I don't have it in me to sing a sad song forever.

So despite the news, despite the aches in my body, despite the phone call last night that says she's waiting for the test results, despite yesterday's shooting, despite the unknown and unchanged, I am going to sing a song of hope.

Like a canary in a snowstorm,

I don't need another song of what is;

I need a song of what could be.

So sing with me.

Our voices may get drowned out by the wind, but surely someone will ask: Was that a flash of yellow in the snow?

Was that the sound of hope?

Prayer by Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Welcome to St. Matthew's! We are glad you are here.

The People are invited to read the words in **bold**. If you're joining us from home, please stand, kneel, sing, and pray with us as you're able. No matter where you are, joining in this worship service is a form of prayer that connects you to God and to each other. Whenever two or three are gathered, even virtually, Scripture reminds us that Jesus is present among us.

Children are most welcome and are encouraged to participate in worship.

To the parents of children: Relax! God put the wiggle in children. Sit toward the front so your little ones can see and hear. Go ahead and quietly answer their questions. If you don't know the answer, the priest would love to talk to your little one. When you sing the hymns and join in the prayers, you teach little hearts how to be faithful; you are their best model. If you need to leave the service, that's okay. Don't be shy about coming back. It was Jesus who said, "Let the little children come to me."

Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, there is a place for you at St. Matt's.

Prelude

The hymns can be found in the blue hymnals. Please stand as you are able.

Processional Hymn 53GOTTES SOHN IST KOMMEN"Once he came in blessing"

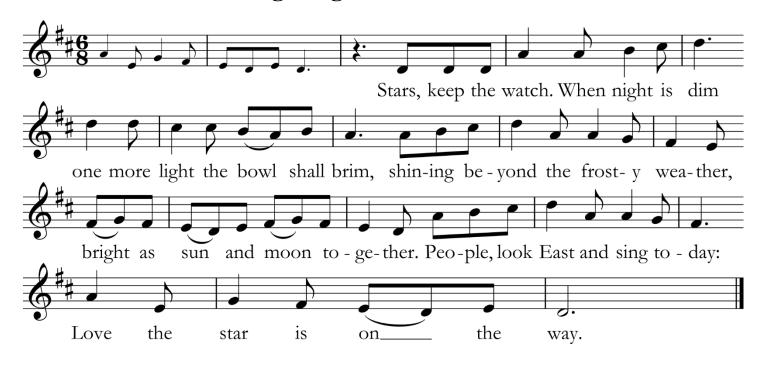
The Lighting of the Fourth Candle

Lector Lord, my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all people – a light to bring light to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.

- Luke 2:30-32

Celebrant Dear God, let the glorious light of Jesus' love shine in our lives and proclaim the Good News to everyone we meet. Amen. Carol at the Candle Lighting

BESANÇON CAROL

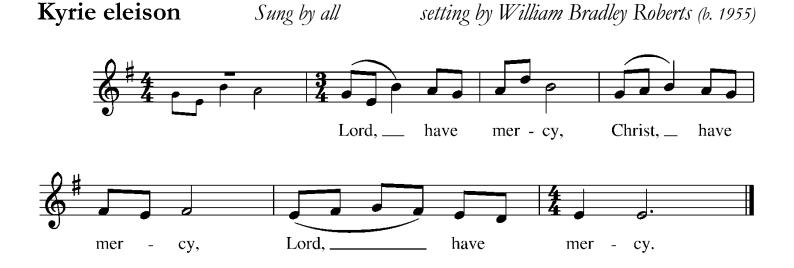


+ T H E W O R D O F G O D +

CelebrantBlessed are you, holy and living One.PeopleYou come to your people and set them free.

The Collect for Purity (said by all)

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.



The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray. Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The congregation may be seated.

The First Reading

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

When the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

LectorThe Word of the Lord.PeopleThanks be to God.

The Song of Mary

setting by Thomas Tallis (1505-85)

Luke 1:46-55

My soul doth magnify the Lord, *

and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

For he hath regarded *

the lowliness of his handmaiden.

For behold from henceforth *

all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me, *

and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him *

throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with his arm; *

he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, *
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, *
as he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: * as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Second Reading

Romans 16:25-27

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-- to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

LectorThe Word of the Lord.PeopleThanks be to God.

Please stand as you are able.

Sequence Hymn 82 vv. 1-3 DIVINUM MYSTERIUM "Of the Father's love begotten"

The Holy Gospel

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke.*People* Glory to you, Lord Christ.

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 forever, 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.

CelebrantThe Gospel of the Lord.PeoplePraise to you, Lord Christ.

The Nicene Creed

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.

The Prayers of the People

The Intercessor begins, the People respond with the words in **bold**.

- Intercessor Beloved of God, the Lord is with you! Let us pray to the Almighty, saying, "My soul proclaims your greatness, O Lord; *our spirits rejoice in you!*"
- *Intercessor* God our Savior, give to your Church the humble heart of Mary. In our lives and ministries, let it be with us according to your Word. My soul proclaims your greatness, O Lord;
- People Our spirits rejoice in you!
- *Intercessor* God our Savior, give grace to your bishops, priests, and deacons. Strengthen all your ministers to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. My soul proclaims your greatness, O Lord;
- *People* Our spirits rejoice in you!
- *Intercessor* God our Savior, you cast down the mighty from their thrones and lift up the lowly. May both the mighty and the lowly, and all those in-between, experience the amazing depth of your great mercy. My soul proclaims your greatness, O Lord;
- People Our spirits rejoice in you!
- *Intercessor* God our Savior, you long for the hungry to be filled with good things. Bless us to work with you to bring forth food and drink from your precious earth. My soul proclaims your greatness, O Lord;
- People Our spirits rejoice in you!
- Intercessor God our Savior, we ask you to do great things in our community, in our neighborhoods, in our region. My soul proclaims your greatness, O Lord;
- People Our spirits rejoice in you!

Intercessor God our Savior, you always remember your promise of mercy. Be merciful to the lonely, despised, sorrowful, and sick. Speak good news into sad hearts; come to the help of the needy. We pray especially for Daniel, Kristen, Vinny, Antonio, Thomas, Diana, James, Carol, Susan, Lee, Arlene, Barbara, Mike, Jack, Chuck, Joan, David, Liz, Ann, Jack, Pat, Kathy, Dick, Scott, Martin, Ann, Melinda, Aaron, Dann and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. We also remember those we name now either silently or aloud. My soul proclaims your greatness, O Lord;

People **Our spirits rejoice in you!**

- *Intercessor* God our Savior, nothing is impossible with you. May all who have died find a place in the eternal kingdom of your Christ. My soul proclaims your greatness, O Lord;
- *People* **Our spirits rejoice in you!**
- *Intercessor* We give thanks for all the blessings of this life, especially for the life of Emily Walke Woodside, in whose memory the altar flowers are given.

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

The People may add their own intercessions either silently or aloud. Silence may be kept.

Celebrant Lord, open unto me. Open unto me – light for my darkness. Open unto me – courage for my fear. Open unto me – hope for my despair. Open unto me – peace for my turmoil. Open unto me – joy for my sorrow. Open unto me strength for my weakness. Open unto me – wisdom for my confusion. Open unto me – forgiveness for my sins. Open unto me – love for my hates. Open unto me – thy Self for my self. Lord, Lord, open unto me! — Howard Thurman

Celebrant Lord, we gather up our prayers and offer them to you, knowing full well that there are signs in the sun and moon and stars and in the common events of ordinary life that call us to attend to your coming. Prepare us for the time of trial and for your dominion, coming now and at the close of this age. **Amen.**

The Confession

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor. The Celebrant says Silence may be kept. The people may stand or kneel. Celebrant and People say together Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The Celebrant says

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins though our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Peace	
Celebrant	The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People	And also with you.

+ THE HOLY COMMUNION+

Celebrant says an Offertory sentence, the congregation may be seated. Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his Name; bring offerings and come into his courts.

Offertory Anthem

George Guest (1924-2002)

"When came in flesh"

When came in flesh the incarnate Word, The heedless world slept on, And only simple shepherds heard That God had sent His Son.

When comes the Savior at the last, From east to west shall shine The awful pomp, and earth aghast Shall tremble at the sign.

Then shall the pure of heart be blest; As mild He comes to them, As when upon the virgin's breast He lay at Bethlehem.

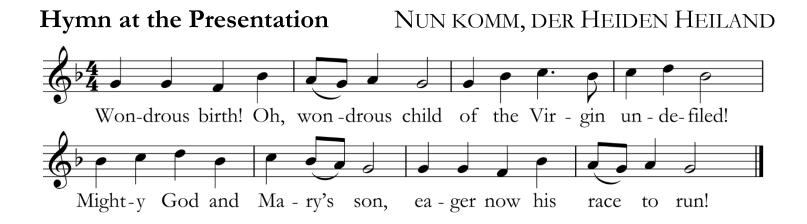
Lord, who could dare see Thee descend In state, unless he knew Thou art the sorrowing sinner's Friend, The gracious and the true?

Dwell in our hearts, O Savior blest; So shall Thine advent's dawn 'Twixt us and Thee, our bosom guest, Be but the veil withdrawn. Whether you've joined us today from near or far, in person or online, please consider making a gift of thanksgiving to support the work of God at St. Matthew's. Be part of God's mission with us as we make our way into the new life God promises.

Visit <u>www.stmatthewswilton.org/offering</u>. Designate it as a gift or as part of your pledge. No gift is too small. All gifts honor the God who honors us with life, breath, love, and salvation.



Please stand as you are able.

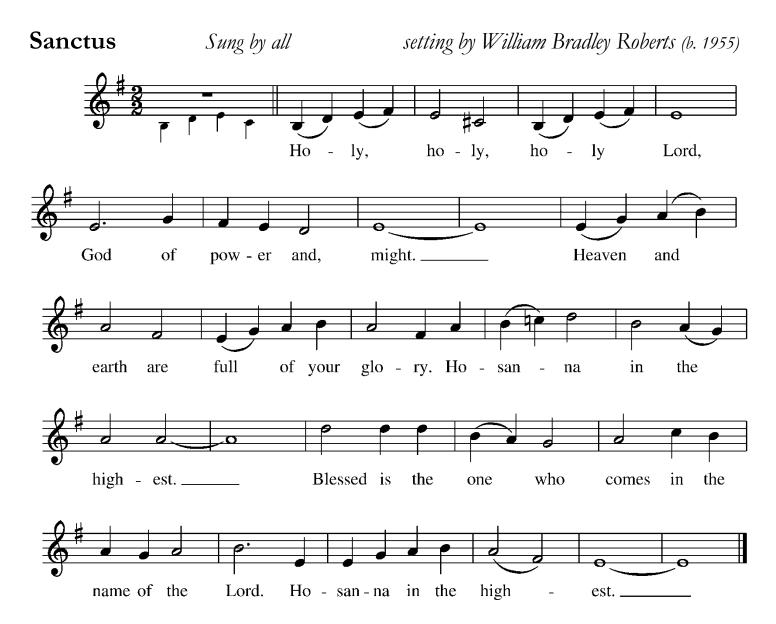


The Great Thanksgiving

Celebrant	The Lord be with you.
People	And also with you.
Celebrant	Lift up your hearts.
People	We lift them to the Lord.
Celebrant	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People	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 sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

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:



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 [______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.

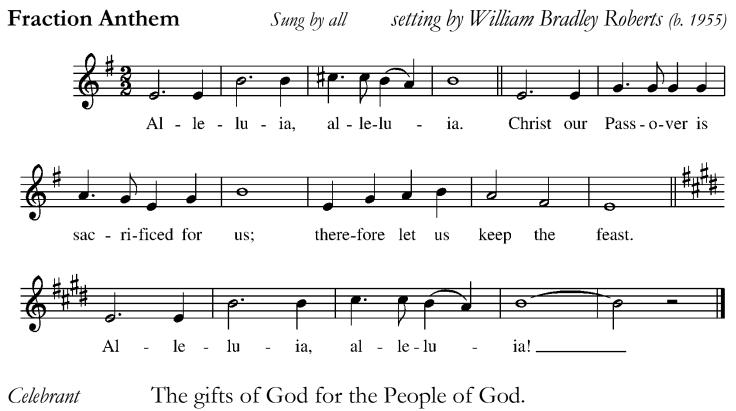
By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN**.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say: *Celebrant 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.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.



All are welcome to come forward, as directed by ushers, to receive communion or a blessing. Please wait for the Ushers and follow their instructions. When you reach the center of the space, please open your hands and lay them flat to receive the bread or cross your arms over your chest to receive a blessing. You may then choose to drink from the silver chalice to your left or intinct (dip the wafer in the wine) in the clay chalice to your right. If you do not wish to receive wine, simply pass the cup, and make your way back to your seat. We believe Jesus is fully present in both the bread and the wine, so if you receive the bread, you have participated fully in communion. Let the Priest know if you need a gluten free wafer by first extending your palms down. If you would like to have communion brought to your pew, please let an Usher know.

A stable lamp is lighted

Communion Anthem

Andújar

A stable lamp is lighted whose glow shall wake the sky; the stars shall bend their voices, and every stone shall cry. And every stone shall cry, and straw like gold shall shine; a barn shall harbour heaven, a stall become a shrine.

This child through David's city shall ride in triumph by; the palm shall strew its branches, and every stone shall cry. And every stone shall cry, though heavy, dull and dumb, and lie within the roadway to pave his kingdom come. Yet he shall be forsaken, and yielded up to die; the sky shall groan and darken, and every stone shall cry. And every stone shall cry for gifts of love abused; God's blood upon the spearhead, God's blood again refused.

But now, as at the ending, the low is lifted high; the stars shall bend their voices, and every stone shall cry. And every stone shall cry in praises of the child by whose descent among us the worlds are reconciled.

GABRIEL'S MESSAGE

All sing the following hymn, either sitting or kneeling:

Communion Hymn 265

"The angel Gabriel from heaven came"

If you are joining from home or have not received communion, you may offer this prayer to the Lord.

The Act of Reception

Saint Augustine's Prayer Book (2nd ed)

The Celebrant and the People say together

In union, Blessed Jesus, with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day, I long to offer you praise and thanksgiving, for creation and all the blessings of this life, for the redemption won for us by your life, death, and resurrection, for the means of grace and the hope of glory.

I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament, and, since I cannot at this time receive communion, I pray you to come into my heart. I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart, my soul, and my mind. Let nothing separate me from you; let me serve you in this life until, by your grace, I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace.

Come Lord Jesus, and dwell in my heart in the fullness of your strength; be my wisdom and guide me in right pathways; conform my life and actions to the image of your holiness; and, in the power of your gracious might, rule over every hostile power that threatens or disturbs the growth of your kingdom, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

The Postcommunion Prayer

Celebrant People Let us pray. 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.

Parish Announcements

The Blessing

The Celebrant blesses the People

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, scatter the darkness from before your path, and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of our God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, be with you this day and evermore. **Amen.**

Recessional Hymn 74

VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

"Blest be the King whose coming"

The Celebrant offers the dismissal,				
Celebrant	Our Lord says, 'I am coming soon.'			
People	Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.			
Celebrant	May the Lord, when he comes, find us watching and waiting.			
People	Amen.			

Postlude



Worship Leaders

Celebrant & Preacher Eucharistic Ministers Lectors Intercessor Music Director Choir Altar Guild Counters



The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach Anne Newton, Sharon Pearson Mary Obermayer, Lorena Morales Aparicio Anne Newton Andrew Leslie Cooper Kelsey Guinipero, Janet Nobles, Tim Lind, Ed Fitzpatrick Debbie Fuller, Jen DeAngelis, Joy Ruterman Chris Perry, David Gortz

Today's altar flowers are given in memory of Emily Walke Woodside by her family, Bill, Sam, and Anne Woodside.

Prayer Requests Specific prayer requests will be kept on the prayer list for <u>six weeks</u>. Please call or email the office if you have additions or deletions to the prayer list. You are encouraged to offer your own prayers silently or aloud as indicated in the Prayers of the People.

Today and through the week, we remember all those who have been commended to our prayers. For those who are sick or in need: *Daniel, Kristen, Vinny, Antonio, Thomas, Diana, James, Carol, Susan, Lee, Arlene, Barbara, Mike, Jack, Chuck, David, Joan, Liz, Ann, Jack, Pat, Kathy, Dick, Scott, Martin, Ann, Melinda, Aaron, Dann and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. For those serving in the military, Matthew Comeau.*

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for St. Luke/St. Paul, Bridgeport; St. John's, Bridgeport; St. Mark's, Bridgeport. For the children of the world, the Bishops' Fund for Children, and all ECCT ministries for children at risk.



UPCOMING CONCERTS

Friday, Jan 19, 2024, 7:30 PM: Michelle Pauker | American Songbook

Friday, Feb 02, 2024, 7:30 PM: Westminster Choir

Friday, Mar 22, 2024, 7:30 PM: Hildegard, Bach, and Pärt (free)

Friday, Apr 05, 2024, 7:30 PM: Chhandayan | Holi Festival of Colors

Saturday, May 18, 2024, 7:30 PM: La Fiocco

Saturday, Jun 08, 2024, 7:30 PM: Grand Finale — The Bach Family

Tickets and subscriptions available at <u>www.stmatthewswilton.org/aasm-tickets</u>



Weekly Calendar – December 24 – December 31

Sunday, December 24	The Fourth Sunday of Advent
10:00am	Holy Eucharist – Rite II
3:30pm 4:00pm	Christmas Eve Musical Prelude Christmas Eve Family Service Holy Eucharist – Rite II
8:30pm 9:00pm	Musical Prelude Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Holy Eucharist – Rite II
Sunday, December 31	The First Sunday after Christmas
10:00am	Pajama Lessons & Carols

Please note: The Office will be closed from 12/25 thru 1/1 to give our staff some well deserved time off.

Connection details available on our website, in the e-news, and in our Parishioner Facebook group.

Need to sign up for the e-news? It's easy - just go to www.stmatthewswilton.org/newsletter.

Need to join the Parishioner Facebook Group? Go here: https://www.facebook.com/groups/StMatthewsOnline/

Need something else? Send Marissa a note or be in touch with another member of the staff.

Worship Schedule at St. Matthew's

Holy Eucharist on Sundays at 10am

Please keep an eye on our website and social media as well as our e-news. There you'll find information and opportunities to connect for friends and members of all ages.



<u>Staff</u>

RectorThe Rev. Marissa S. Rohrbach, marissa@stmatthewswilton.orgMusic Ministries & Organist Andrew Leslie Cooper, andrew@stmatthewswilton.orgParish AdministratorNancy Johnson, office@stmatthewswilton.orgDirector of WEPCODonna Savage, wepco@optonline.netBookkeeperLouann Miska, louann.miska@gmail.comMedia TechnicianMatthew HenshawNursery StaffLucia SatoSextonAlix Williams, Jairo Mejia

Wardens and Officers

Warden	Pam Ely	Clerk	Jennifer DeAngelis
Warden	Anne Newton	Asst. Treasurer	Brian Angerame
Treasurer	Rob Kyle		

The Vestry

Eleanor Arnold Beth Baker Pam Carlson Amy Gubner Vytas Kisielius Endy Perry Paul Reis

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