



Saint Matthew's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH



**Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service
December 24, 2023
9:00 pm**

Merry CHRISTMAS

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Whether you are a shepherd or an angel,
a wise person, a child, a parent, or a
sheep, know that
you are welcome in this place.
There is joy to be found for you tonight.
God loves you. And so do we.

Visitor's Card found in the pew so that we can get to know you. Everything you need to participate is in this worship bulletin. The people read the portions of the service printed in **bold**. The ushers will help you find your way to communion if you wish to receive.

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." **All are welcome!** **Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, there is a place for you at St. Matt's.**

The Prelude

O come, all ye faithful — Musette Jeanne Demessieux (1921–68)
(No. 2 from *12 Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes*, Op. 8)
Andrew Leslie Cooper, *organ*

Sing we now of Christmas French traditional tune
harmonized by Martin Shaw (1866–1926)
St. Matthew's Church Choir

Sing we now of Christmas, Noël, sing we here! Hear our grateful praises To the babe so dear.	Angels called to shepherds, "Leave your flocks at rest, Journey forth to Bethlehem, Find the child so blest."
<i>Sing we Noël, the King is born, Noël!</i>	<i>Sing we Noël...</i>
<i>Sing we now of Christmas, sing we now Noël!</i>	

In Bethlehem they found him;
Joseph and Mary mild,
Seated by the manger,
Watching the holy child.
Sing we Noël...

Ouverture-Suite in G major, TWV 55:G9 Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)

I. Overture

String quartet

God rest you merry

English traditional tune

harmonized by David Willcocks (1919-2015)

St. Matthew's Church Choir

God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our savior
Was born on Christmas day
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray:
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heavenly father
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The son of God by name:
O tidings of comfort and joy.

Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and fellowship
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All others doth deface:
O tidings of comfort and joy.

Ouverture-Suite in G major, TWV 55:G9 Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)

II. Air

String quartet

Lo how a rose e'er blooming

14th c. German tune

harmonized by Michael Praetorius (1571–1621)

St. Matthew's Church Choir

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
As men of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright,
Amid the cold of winter
When half-spent was the night

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind:
With Mary we behold it,
The Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright
She bore to men a Savior
When half-spent was the night.

O flower, whose fragrance tender
With sweetness fills the air,
Dispel in glorious splendor
The darkness everywhere;
True man, yet very God,
From sin and death now save us
And share our every load.

Ouverture-Suite in G major, TWV 55:G9 Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)

III. Gavotte

IV. Courante

String quartet

Infant holy, infant lowly

Polish traditional tune

harmonized by David Willcocks (1919–2015)

St. Matthew's Church Choir

Infant holy, infant lowly,
For his bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing,
Noëls ringing, tidings bringing,
Christ the babe is Lord of all!
Christ the babe is Lord of all!

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
Vigil 'til the morning new;
Saw the glory, heard the story,
Tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
Praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the babe was born for you!
Christ the babe was born for you!

Ouverture-Suite in G major, TWV 55:G9 Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)

V. Chaconne

VI. Menuet & Trio

String quartet

I. Introit

II. Kyrie eleison

St. Matthew's Church Choir

Micaela Bottari, *soprano*

Noah Klein, *organ*

Guillô, play your tambourin,
Robin with your flute begin,
Play your pipe and play your drum,
Turelurelu! Patapatapan!
Play your pipe and play your drum.
Sing Noël to all and some!

Dance and sing and leap with joy
At the birth of the infant boy.
Dance with pipe and dance with drum.
Turelurelu! Patapatapan!
Dance with pipe and dance with drum
For to us is born a son.

Man of ancient days, he sings
In praise of the King of kings,
When you hear the pipe and drum
Turelurelu! Patapatapan!
When you hear the pipe and drum
You will know that the savior's come.

The people that walked in darkness
have seen a great light:
they that dwell in the land of the shadow
of death,
upon them hath the light shined.

For unto us a child is born,
unto to us a Son is given:
and the government shall be
upon his shoulder:
and his name shall be called
Wonderful, Counsellor,
The Almighty God,
The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace.

Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison. (*Lord, have mercy.*)
Christe eleison. (*Christ, have mercy.*)
Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison. (*Lord, have mercy.*)

+ The Word of God +

The People stand as the bells are rung.

Processional Hymn

ADESTE FIDELES

“O come, all ye faithful”



1	O come, all ye faith - ful,	Joy - ful and tri - um - phant,
2	God of God,	Light of Light,
3	See how the shep - herds,	Sum-moned to his cra - dle,
4	Child, for us sin - ners	Poor and in the man - ger,
5	Sing, choirs of an - gels,	Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
6	Yea, Lord, we greet thee,	Born for our sal - va - tion;



1	O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;	
2	Lo! he ab - hors not the Vir - gin's womb;	
3	Leav - ing their flocks, draw nigh with low - ly fear;	
4	Fain we em - brace thee, with awe and love;	
5	Sing, all ye ci - ti - zens of heav'n a - bove;	
6	Je - su, to thee be glo - ry giv'n;	



1	Come and be - hold him	Born the King of An - gels:
2	Ve - ry God, Be - got - ten, not cre - a - ted:	
3	We too will thi - ther	Bend our joy - ful foot - steps:
4	Who would not love thee,	Lov - ing us so dear - ly?
5	Glo - ry to God	In the high - est:
6	Word of the fa - ther,	Now in flesh ap - pear - ing:



O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



O come let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

The Lighting of the Candles

Lector God of wonders that never cease, tonight the Savior is born. Tonight a light is given to all of us who walk in darkness, that we might see the glory of the Lord. Help us to know this light and to follow it always.

Celebrant Holy God you left the glory of heaven to take upon yourself our fragile humanity. You came to us in love and yet we denied you room. Tonight, we light candles and celebrate your birth as we seek to make room in our lives, our hearts, and this world for your promises of hope, peace, love, and joy. May these virtues shine brightly in our lives as we welcome you into our hearts and seek to proclaim your good news in the world this Christmas. **Amen.**

Carol at the Candle Lighting

Sung by all

BESANÇON CAROL

An - gels, an - nounce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming
with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look East and sing to - day:
Love the Lord is on the way.

Celebrant Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.

People **Glory to God for ever and ever.**

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.

Gloria in excelsis setting from *Missa Carolae*, by James Whitbourn (b. 1963)

The Choir begins

Gloria in excelsis Deo

Glory to God in the highest

The People repeat

The musical notation consists of two staves in G major and 12/8 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (F major), and a 12/8 time signature. The melody starts with a dotted quarter note G4, followed by a dotted quarter note A4, a dotted quarter note B4, and a dotted quarter note C5. The second staff continues the melody with a dotted quarter note D5, a dotted quarter note E5, a dotted quarter note F5, and a dotted quarter note G5. The lyrics are: Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o, in ex - cel - sis De - o.

The Choir continues

et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.	<i>and peace to his people on earth.</i>
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te.	<i>We praise you. We bless you.</i>
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.	<i>We worship you. We glorify you.</i>
Gratias agimus tibi	<i>We give thanks to you</i>
propter magnam gloriam tuam.	<i>for your great glory.</i>
Domine Deus, Rex cælestis,	<i>Lord God, Heavenly King,</i>
Deus Pater omnipotens.	<i>almighty God and Father.</i>
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe,	<i>Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son,</i>
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,	<i>Lord God, Lamb of God,</i>
Filius Patris.	<i>Son of the Father.</i>
Qui tollis peccata mundi,	<i>You take away the sin of the world:</i>
miserere nobis.	<i>have mercy on us.</i>
Qui tollis peccata mundi,	<i>You take away the sin of the world:</i>
suscipe deprecationem nostram.	<i>receive our prayer.</i>
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,	<i>You are seated at the right hand of the Father:</i>
miserere nobis.	<i>have mercy on us.</i>
Quoniam tu solus sanctus,	<i>For you alone are the Holy One,</i>
Tu solus Dominus	<i>You alone are the Lord,</i>
Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe,	<i>you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ.</i>
Cum Sancto Spiritu	<i>With the Holy Spirit</i>
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.	<i>in the glory of God the Father. Amen.</i>

The Collect of the Day

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 congregation may be seated.

The First Reading

Isaiah 62:6-12

Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have posted sentinels;
all day and all night

they shall never be silent.

You who remind the LORD,

take no rest,

and give him no rest

until he establishes Jerusalem

and makes it renowned throughout the earth.

The LORD has sworn by his right hand

and by his mighty arm:

I will not again give your grain

to be food for your enemies,

and foreigners shall not drink the wine

for which you have labored;

but those who garner it shall eat it

and praise the LORD,

and those who gather it shall drink it

in my holy courts.

Go through, go through the gates,

prepare the way for the people;

build up, build up the highway,

clear it of stones,

lift up an ensign over the peoples.

The LORD has proclaimed
to the end of the earth:
Say to daughter Zion,
"See, your salvation comes;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him."
They shall be called, "The Holy People,
The Redeemed of the LORD";
and you shall be called, "Sought Out,
A City Not Forsaken."

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

Psalm 97*Sung by the Choir*

chant by Edward C. Bairstow (1874–1946)

- ¹ The LORD is King;
let the earth rejoice; *
let the multitude of the isles be glad.
- ² Clouds and darkness are round about him, *
righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne.
- ³ A fire goes before him *
and burns up his enemies on every side.
- ⁴ His lightnings light up the world; *
the earth sees it and is afraid.
- ⁵ The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD, *
at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
- ⁶ The heavens declare his righteousness, *
and all the peoples see his glory.
- ⁷ Confounded be all who worship carved images
and delight in false gods! *
Bow down before him, all you gods.
- ⁸ Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, *
because of your judgments, O LORD.
- ⁹ For you are the LORD,
most high over all the earth; *
you are exalted far above all gods.
- ¹⁰ The LORD loves those who hate evil;
he preserves the lives of his saints
and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.
- ¹¹ Light has sprung up for the righteous, *
and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted.
- ¹² Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, *
and give thanks to his holy Name.

The Second Reading

Titus 3:4-7

When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

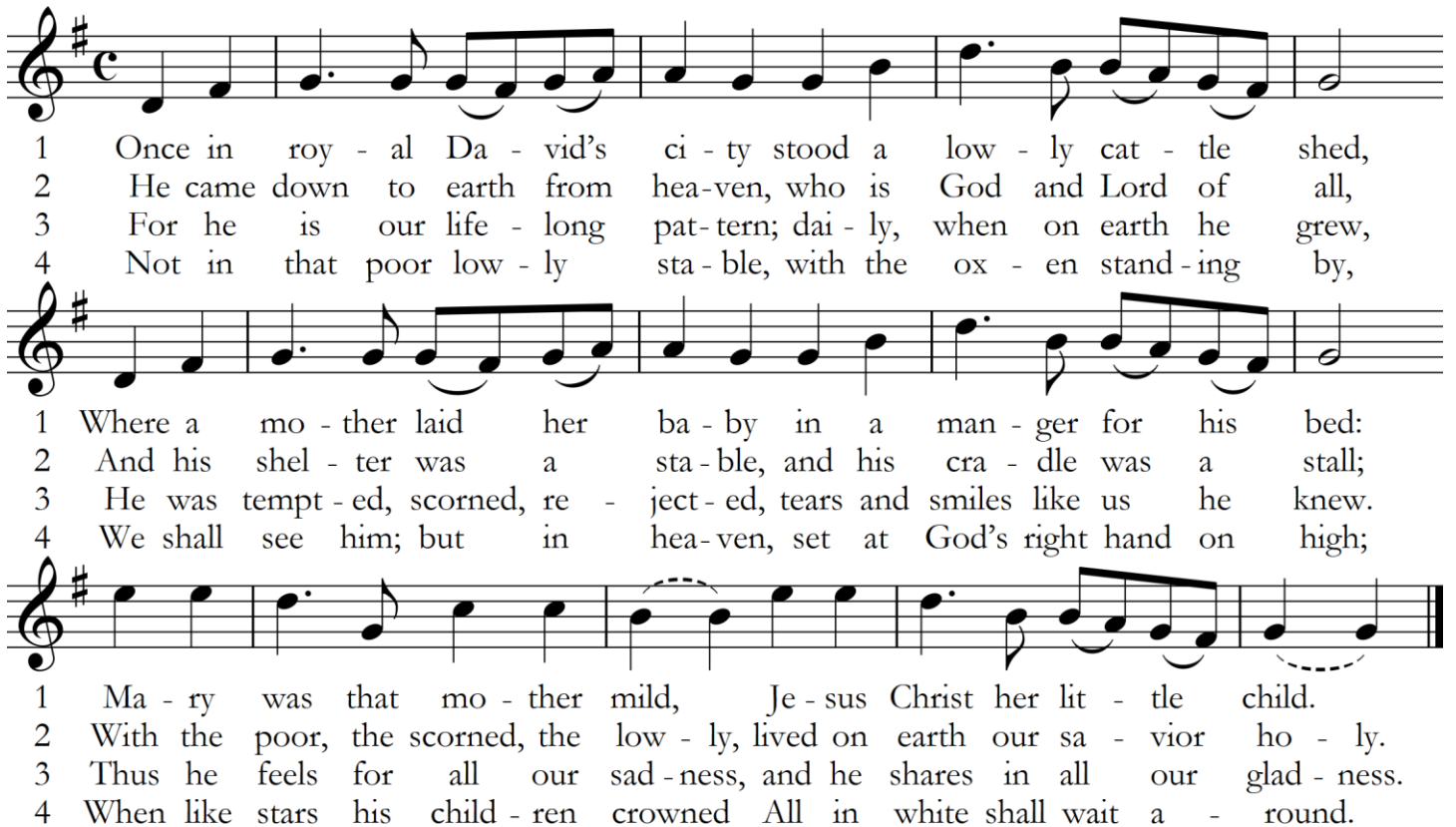
Lector The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand as you are able.

Sequence Hymn

IRBY

“Once in royal David’s city”



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's ci - ty stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
2 He came down to earth from hea - ven, who is God and Lord of all,
3 For he is our life - long pat - tern; dai - ly, when on earth he grew,
4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,

1 Where a mo - ther laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:
2 And his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;
3 He was tempt - ed, scorned, re - ject - ed, tears and smiles like us he knew.
4 We shall see him; but in hea - ven, set at God's right hand on high;

1 Ma - ry was that mo - ther mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
2 With the poor, the scorned, the low - ly, lived on earth our sa - vior ho - ly.
3 Thus he feels for all our sad - ness, and he shares in all our glad - ness.
4 When like stars his child - ren crowned All in white shall wait a - round.

The Gospel

Luke 2:1-20

Celebrant

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke.

People

Glory to you, Lord 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.

Celebrant

The Gospel of the Lord.

People

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Nicene Creed

Please stand as you are able.

The Celebrant and People say together

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 People respond with the words in bold.

Intercessor Beloved of God, rejoicing in the love of God that has taken flesh among us in Christ Jesus, let us confidently bring to the Lord the petitions of our hearts this Christmas night, saying: God of love, **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Gracious God, as a star rose, and drew people from great distances to Bethlehem to greet the Christ-child; Draw us, your Church, and all of your people to you – that we might be the Church and the People who you call us to be. We pray especially for the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, for our Bishops, Jeff and Laura, for our Rector, Marissa, and for all the clergy and people of this diocese. God of love, **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor As you gave Mary your Holy Spirit, filling her with your Presence; Fill us with your Spirit, and renew our lives. We give you thanks for this community at St. Matthew's, for the work you call us to do and for the joy you give us to share together. God of love, **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor As Gentiles streamed to Jesus' Light, and Kings to the brightness of his rising; Draw our nation and all the nations of the world to his brightness. God of love, **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor As angels sang and proclaimed peace on earth, and goodwill to all peoples; Bring us your peace, and bring an end to all terror and strife. We pray especially tonight for places in the world experiencing conflict and violence; especially for the Middle East and our Holy Lane. May peace prevail on earth. God of love, **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor As shepherds were drawn away from their flocks by night; Draw those who do not know you yet to the knowledge and love of you. God of love, **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Our Savior was born in a manger because there was no room in the inn; be present, O God, with those who have nowhere to lay their head, those who are vulnerable, and those who are hungry. God of love, **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Let us pray for our own needs and those of others. We pray for those who are sick or in need of our prayers, 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 (*the people are invited to offer their own intercessions*); God of love, **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor For the members of our military, for first-responders, and for all who risk their lives on behalf of others; especially for Matthew and those we now name. God of love, **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor We pray also for those who have died, and for all those we love and see no longer, especially those we now name (*the people are invited to offer their own intercessions*); God of love, **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor We thank you, Lord for all the blessings of this life, and for all those blessings we now name (*the people are invited to offer their own thanksgivings*); God of love, **Hear our prayer.**

Silence may be kept.

Then the Celebrant adds a concluding Collect

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Confession

Then the Celebrant says Let us confess our sins to God.

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 through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Please stand as you are able.

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Please share a sign of the peace with your neighbors in the pews or with us online.

+ The Holy Communion +

After the 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.



Whether you've joined us today from near or far, in person or online, please consider making a Christmas gift to support the work of God at St. Matthew's.

Visit www.stmatthewswilton.org/offering. 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 give generously.

Offertory Anthem

Nativity Carol

John Rutter (b. 1945)

Born in a stable so bare,
Born so long ago;
Born 'neath light of star
He who loved us so.

*Far away, silent he lay,
Born today, your homage pay,
Christ is born for aye,
Born on Christmas Day.*

Cradled by mother so fair,
Tender her lullaby;
Over her son so dear
Angel hosts fill the sky.

Love in that stable was born
Into our hearts to flow;
Innocent dreaming babe,
Make me thy love to know.

Please stand as you are able.

Doxology at the Presentation

Sung by all

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below, Alleluia, Alleluia.
Praise God above ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

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.**

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing.

You made us in your image and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love.

And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing:

Sanctus setting from *Missa Carolae*, by James Whitbourn (b. 1963)

Sung by the Choir

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,	<i>Holy, Holy, Holy,</i>
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.	<i>Lord, God of power and might,</i>
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.	<i>Heaven and earth are full of your glory.</i>
Hosanna in excelsis.	<i>Hosanna in the highest.</i>

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God. Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice.

Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.

In the fullness of time bring us, with Saint Matthew and all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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

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

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People **Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

Celebrant The gifts of God for the People of God.

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.

If you are joining us 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.

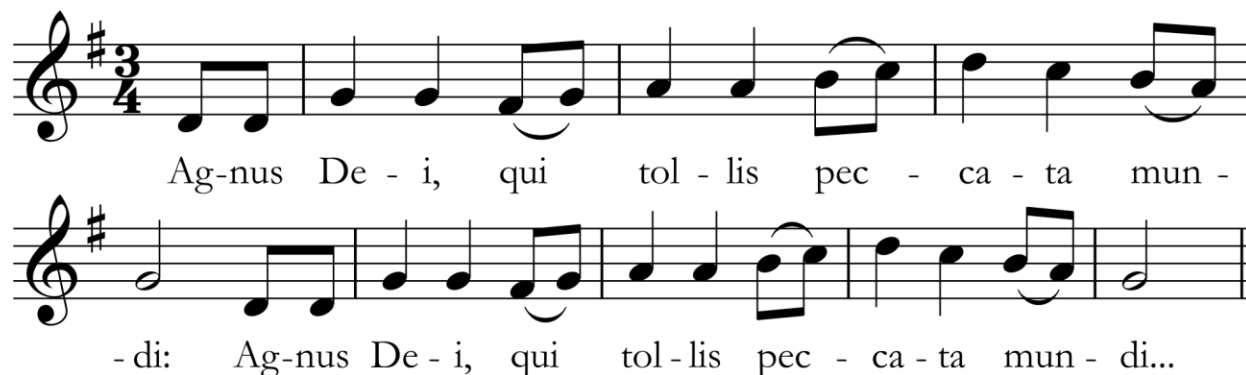
Come Lord Jesus, and dwell in my heart in the fullness of your strength; be my wisdom and guide me in right pathways; conform my life and actions to the image of your holiness; and, in the power of your gracious might, rule over every hostile power that threatens or disturbs the growth of your kingdom,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

Fraction Anthem setting from *Missa Carolae*, by James Whitbourn (b. 1963)

The Choir begins

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, *Lamb of God: you take away the sins of the world:*
miserere nobis. *have mercy on us.*

The People repeat



Ag-nus De - i, qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun -
- di: Ag-nus De - i, qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di...

The Choir continues

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, *Lamb of God: you take away the sins of the world:*
miserere nobis. *have mercy on us.*

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, *Lamb of God: you take away the sins of the world:*
dona nobis pacem. *grant us peace.*

Communion Hymn

GREENSLEEVES

“What child is this, who, laid to rest”



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Ma - ry's lap is sleep - ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean e - state Where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh, Come, pea - sant, king, to own him;



1 Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet, While shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
2 Good Christ - ian, fear: for sin - ners here The si - lent Word is plead - ing.
3 The King of kings sal - va - tion brings, Let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the King, Whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing:



Haste, haste to bring him laud, The babe, the son of Ma - ry.

Communion Hymn

“In the bleak midwinter”

CRANHAM



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter Frost - y wind made moan,
 2 Our God, heav'n can - not hold him Nor___ earth sus - tain;
 3 E - nough for him, whom che - ru - bim Wor - ship night and day,
 4 An - gels and arch - an - gels May have ga - thered there,
 5 What___ can I give him, Poor___ as I am?



1 Earth stood hard as ir - on, Wa - ter like a stone;
 2 Heav'n and earth shall flee a - way When he comes to reign:
 3 A breast - ful of milk, And a man - ger - ful of hay;
 4 Che - ru - bim and se - ra - phim Thronged the___ air:
 5 If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



1 Snow had fal - len, snow on snow, Snow___ on___ snow,
 2 In the bleak mid - win - ter A sta - ble - place suf - ficed
 3 E - nough for him, whom an - gels Fall___ down be - fore,
 4 But on - ly his mo - ther In her mai - den bliss
 5 If I were a wise man I would do my part;



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, Long___ a - go.
 2 The Lord___ God Al - migh - ty Je - sus___ Christ.
 3 The ox and ass and ca - mel Which___ a - dore.
 4 Wor - shipped the Be - lov - ed With___ a___ kiss.
 5 Yet what I can I give him — Give___ my___ heart.

The Postcommunion Prayer

Celebrant

Let us pray. Loving God,

People

**We give you thanks for restoring us in your image
and nourishing us with spiritual food**

in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.

Now send us forth a people, forgiven, healed, renewed;

that we may proclaim your love to the world

and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.

As the Postcommunion Hymn begins, light will be passed from candle to candle. Please use your unlit candle to receive the light from the person next to you and to share it with others around you. The Sanctuary will be darkened.

Postcommunion Hymn

“Silent Night”

STILLE NACHT

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, All is calm, all is bright
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Shep-herds quake at the sight,
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God, love's pure light

1 Round yon vir - gin mo-ther and child. Ho - ly in-fant, so ten-der and mild,
2 Glo-ries stream from hea-ven a - far, Heav'n-ly hosts sing al - le - lu - ia;
3 Ra-diant beams from thy ho - ly face, With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,

1 Sleep in hea - ven-ly peace._____ Sleep in hea - ven-ly peace.
2 Christ, the sa - vior, is born!_____ Christ, the sa - vior, is born!
3 Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth._____ Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

You may wish to extinguish your candle at the conclusion of the hymn.

The Christmas Blessing

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier be with you this night and always. **Amen.**

Recessional Hymn

MENDELSSOHN

“Hark! the herald angels sing”



1 Hark! the he - rald an - gels sing___ Glo - ry to the new-born King;
2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored,___ Christ the e - ver - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!___ Hail the Sun of Right-eous-ness!



1 Peace on earth and mer - cy mild,___ God and sin - ners re - con - ciled:
2 Late in time be - hold him come___ Off-spring of a vir - gin's womb:
3 Light and life to all he brings,___ Ris'n with heal - ing in his wings;



1 Joy - ful all ye na - tions rise,___ Join the tri - umph of the skies,___
2 Veiled in flesh the God-head see,___ Hail th'in-carn - ate De - i - ty!___
3 Mild he lays his glo - ry by,___ Born that man no more may die,___



1 With th'an - gel - ic host pro-claim, Christ is___ born in Beth - le - hem.
2 Pleased as man with man to dwell, Je - sus,___ our Em - man - u - el.
3 Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to___ give them se - cond birth.



Hark! the he - rald an - gels sing Glo - ry___ to the new-born King.

Dismissal

Celebrant Alleluia! Alleluia! Our Savior is born among us! Go in peace and love to find him and serve him in all the places you go and all the people you meet!

People **Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

The People may be seated.

Postlude

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Sinfonia from Cantata 29



Worship Leaders

Celebrant & Preacher

Eucharistic Ministers

Lectors

Intercessor

Crucifer

Music Director

Organist

Soprano Soloist

String Quartet

The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach

Bill Brautigam, Sharon Pearson

Caroline DeAngelis, John Pearson

Chris Perry

Bill Brautigam

Andrew Leslie Cooper

Noah Klein

Micaela Bottari

Violin I: Lindsey Jones

Violin II: James Gikas

Viola: Colin Benn

Cello: Susan Jimenez

St. Matthew's Church Choir

Choir

Ushers

David Gortz, Chris Perry, Brian Angerame

Counters

Chris Perry, David Gortz



Merry Christmas from St. Matthew's!

If you're visiting us tonight, know that you are welcome. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, no matter what might have kept you away, God's love is always with you. And there is a place for you at St. Matt's. We pray that the Christ child will be born again in your life this Christmas, bringing you the gifts of faith, hope, and love. And that you might come and take your place at St. Matt's as we build a spiritual home where all people are welcome. God bless you, God keep you, and God bring you back safely again.



Welcome from the Rector

I'm so glad that your journey has led you to these pews on Christmas Eve. I hope our worship together tonight will offer you a glimpse into our life together, and that you'll come visit us on Sunday morning - that is the best way to get to know us! No matter who you are or where you are on your spiritual journey, there is a place for you at St. Matt's. Come as you are, bring your whole self, bring your questions, your wonderings, and your desire to know Jesus. No matter who you are, where you came from, what color your skin is, how you got here, or who you love, God loves you, and there is a place here for you.



St. Matt's is a warm and inclusive community of disciples who are learning to be apostles, meaning we are learning together how to serve Christ in the world. We take our faith and the work to which God calls us very seriously - but we don't take ourselves too seriously. You have come to a place of deep friendships, transformative relationships, ringing laughter, and authentic welcome. This is a place of rest and refreshment, a place of learning and growth, a place to come when you're looking for shelter from the storm. It's a place of special welcome for our kids, who are incorporated across all aspects of our life together. It's a place to experience beautiful sacred music as part of our worship, a place of many fantastic choirs. St. Matt's is also a place of many invitations: Join us as we participate in God's mission, come to a Bible study or an adult education program, worship in the beauty of holiness, and share your gifts and talents with us as we serve God together. It is an exquisite blessing in my life to serve as Rector in this place and to be partner in ministry to these faithful, generous, gifted Christians and I hope that you'll come to know the blessing of this community, too.

If you have questions, or if you'd like to connect with me, please don't hesitate to be in touch (marissa@stmatthewswilton.org). The Vestry, Staff, and I look forward to sharing the journey with you. Merry Christmas to you and to all whom you love.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marissa Rohrbach +".

The Rev. Marissa S. Rohrbach +

Choirs at St. Matthew's, Wilton

Music is vital to the lifeblood of our church and its community. Not only is it highly valued by the congregation, but music is fundamental to many aspects of the Episcopal liturgy. Our 10:00am service on Sundays features choir and organ throughout the program year.



St. Matthew's has a place for every child who wishes to sing in choir. Our Chorister program begins in Kindergarten and offers a first-rate musical education in a friendly, fun, and safe environment. Leading worship through music can empower children, ignite valuable self-confidence, and nurture a lifelong love of music. At the same time, they have fun and build friendships.

St. Matthew's Church Choir, which is open to adults and high-schoolers, forms the backbone of our choral music ministry and sings every Sunday. We relish meeting new members at any time and would be delighted to welcome you into our warm, friendly group.

All of our choirs are open to anyone, regardless of musical experience or faith background. Whoever you are, there is a place for you to sing at St. Matthew's.



For more information, contact:
Andrew Leslie Cooper
Director of Music Ministries & Organist
andrew@stmatthewswilton.org

Children and Youth at St. Matthew's, Wilton

Every child is welcome at St. Matthew's. And we want every single one of them to feel loved for just who they are. We create opportunities for kids of all ages to know the love of God and love of community, to learn about service, and to learn to love themselves. Faith formation makes a big difference in the lives of children today: it offers stability, it teaches resiliency, and it helps with the many challenges our kids face, including anxiety.

Spiritual formation starts in The Nursery program here and continues throughout High School. We

offer childcare each Sunday so that parents have an opportunity to worship and tend to their own spiritual formation. And we love having kids in worship, so if you'd rather keep your little ones with you, that's okay. They are welcome to wriggle, and wiggle, and dance, and make noise. We are delighted to have them, no matter what kind of day it might be.



Our K-7 Church School programming also takes place on Sunday during our morning service and Middle School, High School and Confirmation sessions meet throughout the week. Regardless of age, our goal is to teach Children and Youth about the immense love of God towards them and the invitation that awaits them daily to follow God into the fullness of life and purpose.

All Children and Youth are welcome, whoever you are, wherever you are on your spiritual journey, there is a place for you at St. Matthew's.

Christmas Memorial Flowers

In Memory Of Or Thanksgiving For:

Philip & Caroline Pearson
Clifford & Trinetta Ely
Scott Ely
Joanne Bennett

In Thanksgiving for our Family

In Thanksgiving for Jack Lee Sherman

Arthur J. Mannix

In Memory of our Parents

Mike & Marie Perry Masland
Ellen Masland Salyer
Dermod Ives, Jr.
Richard Kendrick, Charles Portman
May C. Proctor, P. Richard Allwork
Robert Phelps and All our grandparents

With joy for my family and friends

Dr. and Mrs. John DeAngelis

Theodore A. Lutkus

Tom Campbell, Jack & Florence Redden

Given By:

John & Sharon Pearson

The Gortz Family

The Ruterma Family

J. Matthew & Lisa Mannix

Betsy & Steve Pettit

The Perry Family

Char Griffin

The DeAngelis Family

The Magnano Family

Jean Campbell

Christmas Music Memorials

In Memory Of Or Thanksgiving For:

In Memory of our Parents

Rick Roberts

Given By:

Betsy & Steve Pettit

The Roberts Family

In Thanksgiving for our Grandchildren,
MacKenzie & Luke

John & Sharon Pearson

James & Harriet Hill
Ernie & Louise Ruterma

The Ruterma Family

Pat & Endy Perry
Jane Phelps

The Perry Family

George & Sylvia Ellis
Harold & Edna Hudspeth
Henry & Anne Shalet
Deborah Watts
Josephine Poor
Georgianna Ellis

Becky & Steve Hudspeth

Arthur J. Mannix

J. Matthew & Lisa Mannix

Elizabeth & John Godfrey
Dorothy & Carl Brautigam

Nancy & Bill Brautigam

In Thanksgiving for our Family

The Gortz Family

With love for my parents,
Ann Newson Griffin
Robert Graham Griffin

Char Griffin

Rector's Discretionary Fund

Louis & Margaret Rossano
Mark & Susan Rossano
Geoffrey Rossano
Laine DiMaria Wayne
Paul Paxton Rohrbach
Nancy Jane Wierman

The Rev. & Mrs. Rohrbach

**Join us for:
Pajama Lessons & Carols
The First Sunday after Christmas
December 31st, 2023
10:00 am**



Children (and adults) of all ages are invited to wear their PJs and stay afterward for cookies and cocoa!!

