

Saint Thomas' Episcopal Parish



Nativity by He Qi

December 24, 2008
The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
5:00 p.m.

WHEREVER YOU MAY BE ON YOUR FAITH JOURNEY,
THERE IS ROOM AT GOD'S TABLE FOR YOU.

The Holy Eucharist

From *Godly Play: A Children's Liturgy for Christmas Eve*

The Word of God

✠ *A bell rings, all stand.*

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People *And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen*

✠ *All sing this one verse of "Joy to the World."*

Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Celebrant Let us hear and witness the story of the birth of Jesus Christ!!

✠ *All are seated.*

A CROWDED BETHLEHEM

✠ *A Narrator reads the story of Bethlehem.*

This night is like no other night.....

✠ *At the conclusion of this part of the story all sorts of animals are brought forward and placed around the crèche while the people sing this one verse of "O Little Town of Bethlehem."*

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

JOSEPH AND MARY ARRIVE

✠ *A Narrator reads the story of Joseph and Mary's arrival.*

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

✠ *At the conclusion of this part of the story the figures of Joseph and Mary are brought forward and placed in the crèche while the people sing this one verse of "Once in Royal David's City."*

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

JESUS IS BORN

✘ *A Narrator reads the story of the birth of Jesus.*

Stars brighten slowly in the sky.....

✘ *At the conclusion of this part of the story the figure of the infant Jesus is brought forward and placed in the crèche while the people sing this one verse of "Away in a Manger."*

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 JOYFUL SHEPHERDS

✘ *A Narrator reads the story of the shepherds rejoicing in Jesus' birth.*

In the hills outside Bethlehem.....

✘ *At the conclusion of this part of the story the figures of the shepherds and the angel are brought forward and placed around the crèche while the people sing this one verse of "While Shepherds Watched."*

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down
And glory shown all around.

THE THREE KINGS TRAVELLING

✘ *A Narrator reads the story of the Three Kings' travels.*

Three camels plod up the road to Bethlehem.

✘ *At the conclusion of this part of the story the figures of the camels and three kings are placed on the side altar while the people sing this one verse of "We Three Kings."*

We three kings of Orient are bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
OOO, star of wonder, star of night, star of royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!

BRINGING GIFTS

✘ *A Narrator reads the story of the Three Kings' arrival and gifts.*

The kings' journey ends in a new kind of king.....

✘ *At the conclusion of this part of the story all the people bring gifts and oblations and gather around the crèche and altar singing this one verse of "Silent Night."*

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.

The Holy Communion

*St. Thomas' invites all to share in the gifts of bread and wine from God's Holy Table.
If you do not wish to receive the bread and wine but would like a blessing, please come forward
and cross your arms with your hands on your shoulders and a priest will provide a blessing.*

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 God thanks and praise.

Celebrant We praise you and we bless you, ever present God, source of life abundant.

People Why do we give God thanks and praise?

Celebrant From before time God made ready the creation. God's Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing.

People Then why do we sometimes feel so lonely?

Celebrant God, you made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away.

People Is there any hope?

Celebrant A voice rings out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord," and our hearts are filled with hope. Time and again you call 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 reigns through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing:

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of you glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the Name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

Celebrant Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. As a sign of new hope and expectation, 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.

People ***Is it tonight we celebrate Jesus?***

Celebrant Tonight and every night. Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with the lonely and broken hearted, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw the whole 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.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay hands upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.

People ***Why do we eat this bread?***

Celebrant On that holy night, so long ago, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it and gave it to his friends and said, "Take, eat: this holy food is given for you. Eat this meal whenever you gather in friendship to remember me."

People ***Why do we drink this wine?***

Celebrant As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, "Drink this all of you. This holy drink is given for you and for all creation. Drink this whenever you gather to remember me."

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Celebrant We now present to you from your creation this bread and this wine. By your Holy Spirit may they become for us today the holy food and drink that Jesus gave his friends so long ago. We ask that we who share this bread and wine may be filled with your Holy Spirit and live as Christ's Body in the world.

We pray that this holy food and drink will be for us your sign of hope, and bring us into everlasting fellowship with each other and bring peace to the world. With Isaiah and Mary and Joseph and all your saints, past, present and yet to come, may we praise your Name for ever and ever.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, we give you honor, glory and praise, for ever and ever.

People: ***Amen.***

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Celebrant: As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray

People: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

THE FRACTION

Celebrant: Alleluia, Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People: Therefore let us keep the feast, Alleluia.

✠ *Communion will be served from two stations at either side of the altar. Please approach the ministers to receive.*

✠ *All stand and sing the*

POST COMMUNION HYMN

Hark the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem!
Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ the everlasting Lord;
Late In time behold him come, off-spring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate Deity.
Pleased as man with us to dwell; Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!

Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Risen with healing in his wings, light and life to all he brings,
Hail the Son of Righteousness! Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Please refer to the Special Flower Insert for the Christmas Memorials and Honorariums.



ST. THOMAS' PARISH
DUPONT CIRCLE ✦ WASHINGTON, DC

We're a **community of Christians on a spiritual journey**. Our worship and *life together* provides a pathway towards a deeper understanding of the risen and transforming Christ. Through joyful singing, engaging preaching, prayer and silence, we come together to share in **one bread, one body**.

A place to find and be found by God.

The People of St. Thomas'

Vestry

*John Carter, Senior Warden; Barbara Hays, Junior Warden
Michael Bell, Dan Costello, Tim Elig, Camille Blake Fall, Mary Hager, Dennis Hobb,
Brad Latham, Michael Mattmiller, Kristin Queen Shaffer*

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Ms. Cindy Pettigrew, Parish Executive Secretary	info@stthomasdc.org
Mr. Timothy Hagy, Music Director	timhagy@comcast.net or
The Rev. John F. Dwyer, Assistant Rector	musician@stthomasdc.org
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