

*st mary's catholic church
greenville, south carolina*



*the nativity of the lord
25 DECEMBER 2025*

✠ Choral Prelude ✠

Conditor alme siderum

7th century; arr: Johann Stadlmayr

*Conditor alme siderum
aeterna lux credentium
Christe redemptor omnium
exaudi preces[voces] supplicum*

*Creator of the stars of night,
Thy people's everlasting light,
Jesu, Redeemer, save us all,
and hear Thy servants when they call.*

*Qui condolens interitu
mortis perire saeculum
salvast mundum languidum
donans reis remedium.*

*Thou, grieving that the ancient curse
should doom to death a universe,
hast found the medicine, full of grace,
to save and heal a ruined race.*

*Vergente mundi vespere
uti sponsus de thalamo
egressus honestissima
Virginis matris clausula.*

*Thou camest, the Bridegroom of the Bride,
as drew the world to evening tide
proceeding from a virgin shrine,
the spotless Victim all divine.*

*Cuius forti pontentiae
genu curvantur omnia
caelestia, terrestia
nutu fatentur subdita.*

*At whose dread Name, majestic now,
all knees must bend, all hearts must bow;
and things celestial Thee shall own,
and things terrestrial Lord alone.*

*Te, Sancte fide quaesumus,
venture iudex saeculi,
conserva nos in tempore
hostis a telo perfidi.*

*O Thou whose coming is with dread,
to judge and doom the quick and dead,
preserve us, while we dwell below,
from every insult of the foe.*



Sussex Carol

text: Luke Wadding; arr. David Willcocks

*On Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring on
Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring news
of great joy, news of great mirth news of our merciful King's birth then why
should men on earth be so sad? Since our Redeemer made us glad then why
should men on earth be so sad? Since our Redeemer made us glad when
from our sin he set us free all for to gain our liberty? When sin departs
before His grace then life and health come in its place when sin departs
before His grace then life and health come in its place angels and men with
joy may sing all for to see the newborn King all out of darkness we have
light which made the angels sing this night all out of darkness we have light
which made the angels sing this night "Glory to God and peace to men now
and for evermore, amen!"*

Verbum caro factum est

16th century, Hans Leo Hassler

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth,
of whose fullness we have all received, and grace for grace, Alleluia.*

A Spotless Rose

Ola Gjeilo

*A Spotless Rose is blowing, sprung from a tender root, of ancient seers'
foreshowing, of Jesse promised fruit; its fairest bud unfolds to light amid
the cold, cold winter, and in the dark midnight. Alleluia. The Rose which I
am singing, where of Isaiah said, is from its sweet root springing in Mary,
purest Maid; through God's great love and might the Blessed Babe she bare
us in a cold, cold winter's night. Alleluia.*

Love Came Down at Christmas

Text: Rossetti; arr. Arlen Clarke

*Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, Love divine; Love was born
at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign. Worship we the Godhead, Love
incarnate, Love divine; worship we our Jesus, but wherewith for sacred
sign? Love shall be our token, love be yours and love be mine; love to God
and others, love for plea and gift and sign.*

The Christmas Proclamation

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF DECEMBER, WHEN AGES BEYOND NUMBER HAD RUN THEIR COURSE FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD, WHEN GOD IN THE BEGINNING CREATED HEAVEN AND EARTH, AND FORMED MAN IN HIS OWN LIKENESS; WHEN CENTURY UPON CENTURY HAD PASSED SINCE THE ALMIGHTY SET HIS BOW IN THE CLOUDS AFTER THE GREAT FLOOD, AS A SIGN OF COVENANT AND PEACE; IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SINCE ABRAHAM, OUR FATHER IN FAITH, CAME OUT OF UR OF THE CHALDEES; IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY SINCE THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WERE LED BY MOSES IN THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT; AROUND THE THOUSANDTH YEAR SINCE DAVID WAS ANOINTED KING; IN THE SIXTY-FIFTH WEEK OF THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL; IN THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-FOURTH OLYMPIAD; IN THE YEAR SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-TWO SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE CITY OF ROME; IN THE FORTY-SECOND YEAR OF THE REIGN OF CAESAR OCTAVIAN AUGUSTUS, THE WHOLE WORLD BEING AT PEACE

Jesus Christ

ETERNAL GOD AND SON OF THE ETERNAL FATHER, DESIRING TO CONSECRATE THE WORLD BY HIS MOST LOVING PRESENCE, WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND WHEN NINE MONTHS HAD PASSED SINCE HIS CONCEPTION, WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN BETHLEHEM OF JUDAH, AND WAS MADE MAN:

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
ACCORDING TO THE FLESH.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

Psalm 2.7

The Lord said to me: You are my Son. It is I who have begotten you this day.

Entrance Hymn

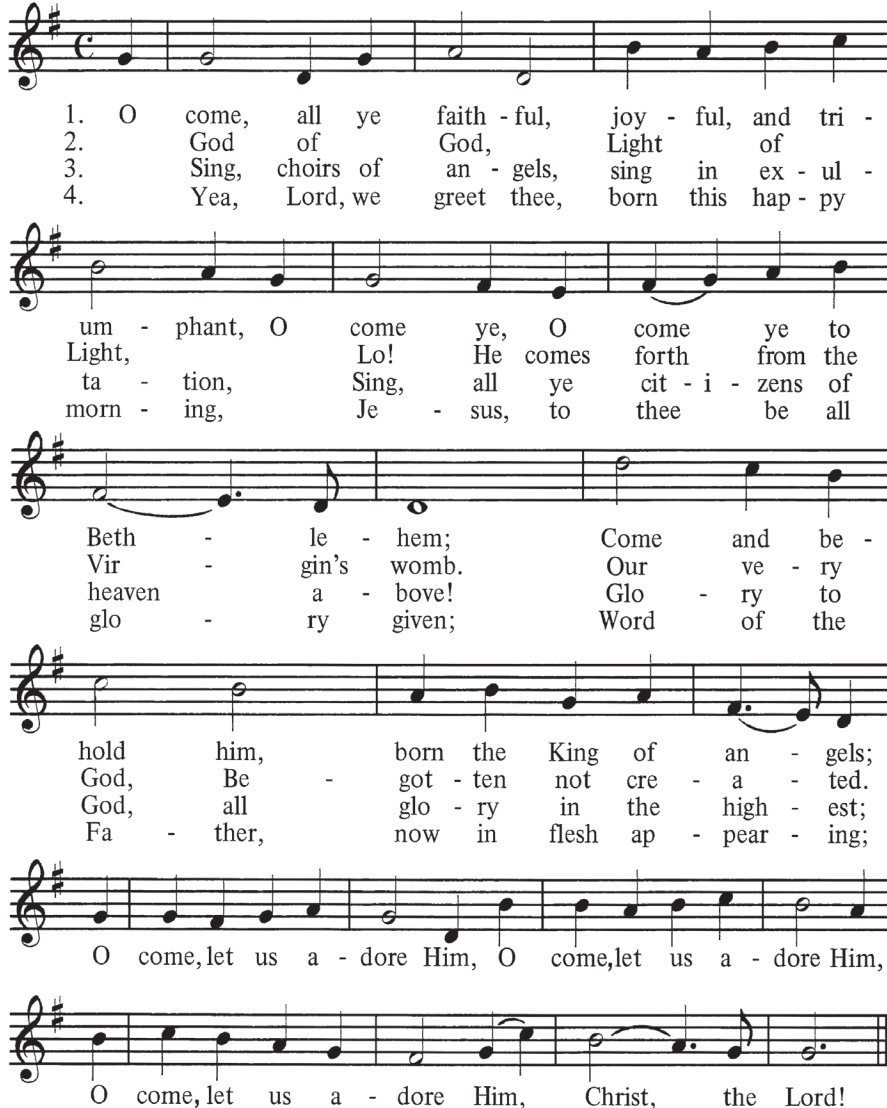
O Come, All Ye Faithful

John Francis Wade, c. 1711-1786

Trans. by Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880 and others

ADESTE FIDELIS Irregular with Refrain

John Francis Wade, c. 1711-1786



1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful, and tri -
 2. God of God, Light of
 3. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul -
 4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py

um - phant, O come ye, O come ye to
 Light, Lo! He comes forth from the
 ta - tion, Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of
 morn - ing, Je - sus, to thee be all

Beth - le - hem; Come and be -
 Vir - gin's womb. Our ve - ry
 heaven a - bove! Glo - ry to
 glo - ry given; Word of the

hold him, born the King of an - gels;
 God, Be - got - ten not cre - a - ted.
 God, all glo - ry in the high - est;
 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!

Penitential Act

Confiteor

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,

All strike their breast, saying:

through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;

therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Priest May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

***People* Amen.**

Kyrie

Ky-ri - e, * e - le - i - son.
Chri - ste, e - le - i - son.
Ky - ri - e, e - le - i - son.
Ky - ri - e, * ** e - le - i - son.

Music: Vatican Edition VIII; acc. by Richard Proulx



Gloria

Gló-ri - a in ex-cél-sis De - o. Et in ter-ra pax ho-mí-ni-bus
bo - nae vo - lun - tá - tis. Lau-dá - mus te.
Be-ne-dí-ci-mus te. A-do-rá - mus te.
Gló-ri - fi - cá-mus te. Grá-ti - as á - gi - mus ti - bi
pro-pter ma-gnam gló-ri - am tu - am. Dó-mi-ne De-us, Rex cae-
lé - stis, De-us, Pa-ter om - ní - po - tens.
Dó-mi-ne Fi-li u - ni - gé - ni - te, Je - su Chri-ste.
Dó-mi-ne De-us, A-gnus De - i, Fí-li-us Pa - tris.
Qui tol - lis pec-cá-ta mun - di, mi-se-ré - re no-bis.
Qui tol - lis pec-cá - ta mun - di, sú-sci-pé de-pre-ca - ti - ó -
nem no - stram. Qui se-des ad délix-te-ram Pa-tris,
mi-se-ré-re no - bis. Quó - ni - am tu so - lus San - ctus.
Tu so-lus Dó - mi - nus. Tu so-lus Al - tís - si-mus,
Je - su Chri - ste. Cum San - cto Spí - ri - tu,
in gló-ri - a De - i Pa - tris. A - men.

Collect

✠ LITURGY OF THE WORD ✠

First Reading

Isaiah 9.1-6

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as people make merry when dividing spoils. For the yoke that burdened them, the pole on their shoulder, and the rod of their taskmaster you have smashed, as on the day of Midian. For every boot that tramped in battle, every cloak rolled in blood, will be burned as fuel for flames. For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, Mighty God, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.



Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 96.1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13



Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all you lands.
Sing to the LORD; bless his name.

Announce his salvation, day after day.
Tell his glory among the nations;
among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.

Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice;
let the sea and what fills it resound;
let the plains be joyful and all that is in them!
Then shall all the trees of the forest exult.

They shall exult before the LORD, for he comes;
for he comes to rule the earth.
He shall rule the world with justice
and the peoples with his constancy.



Second Reading

Titus 2.11-14

Beloved: The grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people as his own, eager to do what is good.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation



I proclaim to you good news of great joy:
today a Savior is born for us,
Christ the Lord. *Response.*

Gospel

Luke 2.1-14

Deacon: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

Deacon: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Deacon: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

Profession of Faith *(spoken slowly and reverently)*

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

All kneel during these two lines:

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
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.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Bidding Prayers

The Collection

The offering is for the support of the parish.

[Please Click Here to Make a Donation to Saint Mary's Church.](#)

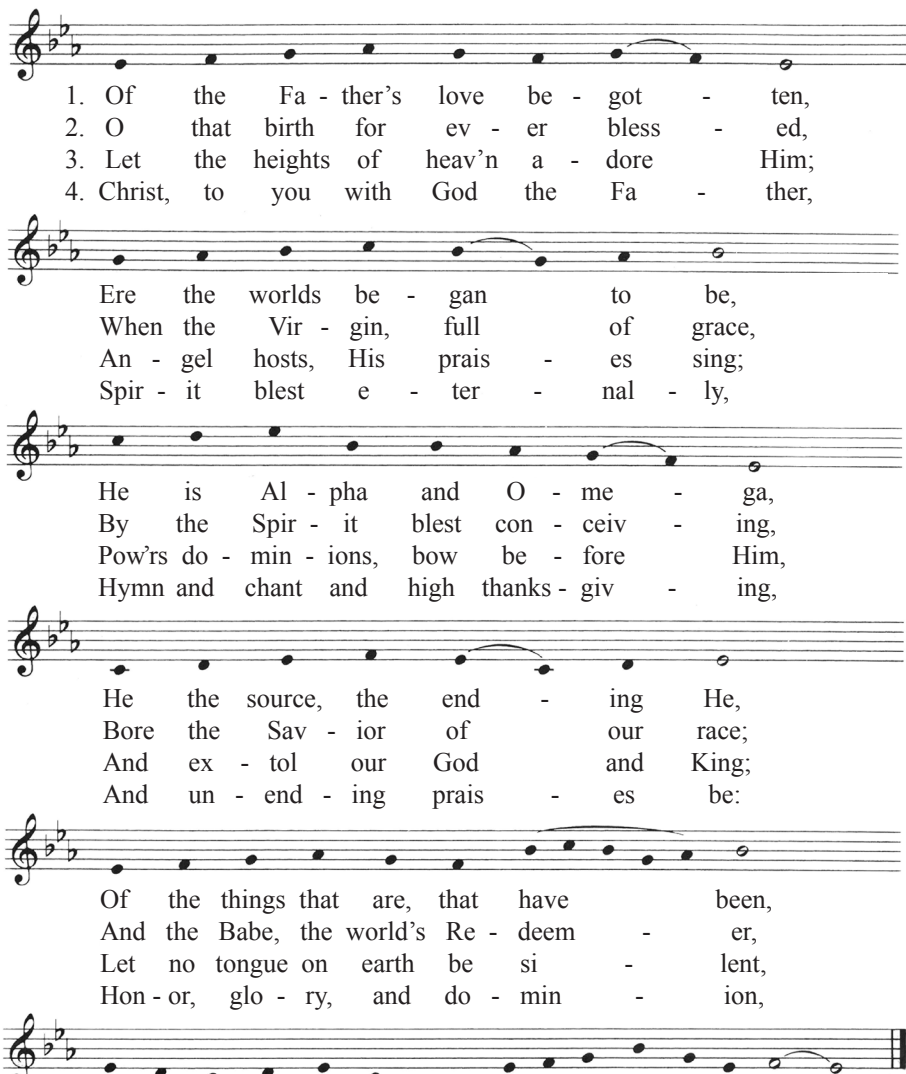
Offertory Antiphon

Psalm 96.11

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad before the face of the Lord: because he comes.

Offertory Hymn

Of the Father's Love Begotten



1. Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten,
 2. O that birth for ev - er bless - ed,
 3. Let the heights of heav'n a - dore Him;
 4. Christ, to you with God the Fa - ther,

Ere the worlds be - gan to be,
 When the Vir - gin, full of grace,
 An - gel hosts, His prais - es sing;
 Spir - it blest e - ter - nal - ly,

He is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
 By the Spir - it blest con - ceiv - ing,
 Pow'rs do - min - ions, bow be - fore Him,
 Hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing,

He the source, the end - ing He,
 Bore the Sav - ior of our race;
 And ex - tol our God and King;
 And un - end - ing prais - es be:

Of the things that are, that have been,
 And the Babe, the world's Re - deem - er,
 Let no tongue on earth be si - lent,
 Hon - or, glo - ry, and do - min - ion,

And that fu - ture years shall see, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more!
 First re - vealed His sa - cred face, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more!
 Ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more!
 And e - ter - nal vic - to - ry, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more!

Text: Corde natus ex Parentis: Aurelius Prudentius, 348-413; Tr. by John M Neale, 1818-1866 and Henry W. Baker, 1821-1877
 Tune: DIVINUM MYSTERIUM, 8 7 8 7 8 7 7; 12th C.; Mode V; Acc. by Richard Proulx, b. 1937, (c) 1985. GIA Publications, Inc

Offertory Anthem

Hodie, Christus natus est

Hodie, Christus natus est. Hodie, salvator apparuit. Hodie, in terra canunt angeli, laetantur Archangeli: Hodie esultant justi dicentes: Gloria in excelsis Deo, Alleluia.

Chant, Mode I

Today Christ is born. Today the Savior has appeared. Today on earth sing angels, the archangels rejoice: Today the righteous rejoice, saying: Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia!



Priest Pray, brethren,
that my sacrifice and yours
may be acceptable to God,
the Almighty Father.

People May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good
and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer Over the Offerings

Sanctus

San - ctus, * San - ctus, San -
 ctus Dó - mi - nus De - us Sá -
 ba - oth. Ple - ni sunt cae - li et
 ter - ra gló - ri - a tu - a. Ho - sán -
 na in ex - céł - sis Be - ne - dí - ctus qui
 ve - nit in nó - mi - ne Dó - mi - ni. Ho - sán -
 na in ex - céł - sis.

Music: Vatican Edition VIII; acc. by Richard Proulx



 COMMUNION RITE 

Priest At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

***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.**

Priest Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy,
we may be always free from sin
and safe from all distress,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

***People* For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.**


Priest Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins,
but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

***People* Amen.**

Priest The peace of the Lord be with you always.

***People* And with your spirit.**

Agnus Dei



A - gnus De - i, * qui tol - lis pec cá - ta mun - di, mi-se - ré - re no - bis.

A - gnus De - i, * qui tol - lis pec-cá - ta mun - di, mi - se - ré - re no - bis.

A - gnus De - i, * qui tol - lis pec-cá - ta mun - di, do - na no - bis pa - cem.

Music: Vatican Edition XVIII; acc. by Richard Proulx



Priest Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

People Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.

The Word became flesh, and we have seen his glory.



AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

LORD JESUS, I LOVE YOU ABOVE ALL THINGS.
HOW I LONG TO RECEIVE YOU WITH MY BROTHERS
AND SISTERS AT THE TABLE YOU HAVE PREPARED.
BUT SINCE I CANNOT AT THIS MOMENT RECEIVE YOU IN
THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF YOUR BODY AND BLOOD,
I ASK YOU TO FEED ME WITH THE MANNA OF YOUR HOLY SPIRIT
AND NOURISH ME WITH YOUR HOLY PRESENCE.

I UNITE MYSELF COMPLETELY TO YOU;
NEVER PERMIT ME TO BE SEPARATED FROM YOUR LOVE.

AMEN.

Communion Motets

The Glory of the Father

Egil Hovland

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. We beheld the glory of the Father, full of grace and truth. In the beginning was the Word. The Word, was with God. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. He came to his own, and his own received him not.

O Holy Night

Text: Cappeau de Roquemaure; arr. John Rutter

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining; it is the night of the dear Savior's birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining, till He appeared and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn! Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices! O night divine! O night when Christ was born! O night divine! O night, O night divine!

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming, with glowing hearts by His cradle we stand. So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming, there came the wise men from Orient land. The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger; in all our trials born to be our friend. He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger. Behold your King; before Him lowly bend!

Truly He taught us to love one another; His law is love and His Gospel is peace. Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother, and in His Name all oppression shall cease. Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we, let all within us praise His holy name. Christ is the Lord! O praise His name forever! His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!



In the bleak midwinter frosty winds made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter long ago.

Our God, Heav'n cannot hold him nor earth sustain; Heav'n and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign: In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed. The Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ.

Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day, a breastful of milk and a mangerful of hay: enough for him, whom angels fall down before, the ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there, cherubim and seraphim thronged the air; but only his Mother in her maiden bliss worshipped the Beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb. If I were a wise man I would do my part, yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

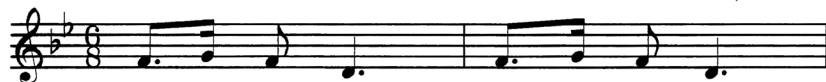


Communion Hymn

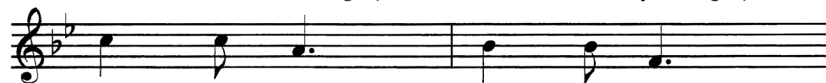
Silent Night

Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849
Tr. Unknown

STILLE NACHT Irregular
Franz Xaver Gruber, 1787-1863



1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night,
2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night,
3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night,



All is calm, all is bright
Shep - herds quake at the sight;
Son of God, love's pure light



Round yon Vir - gin Moth - er and Child.
Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
Ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face,



Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild,
Heaven - ly hosts sing, Al - le - lu - ia,
With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,



Sleep in heav - en - ly peace,
Christ, the Sav - iour, is born!
Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.



Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
Christ, the Sav - iour, is born!
Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.



✠ CONCLUDING RITES ✠

Priest The Lord be with you.
People **And with your spirit.**

Priest May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
People **Amen.**

Deacon Go in peace.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude: Hallelujah Chorus

George Frideric Handel

*We extend our gratitude to the Greenville Brass for
enhancing our celebration of the Nativity of the Lord.*



During Mass at St Mary's, the priest and people face the same direction at the altar, a custom that was once universal in the Catholic Church but until recently has been rare in the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite. For an explanation of this practice, please visit our parish website, smcgvl.org, and look for the link entitled *Facing East to Pray*.

Recessional Hymn

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing



1. Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the
 2. Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored, Christ the ev - er-
 3. Hail the heav'n - born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of



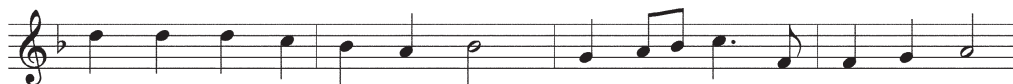
new - born King; Peace on Earth, and mer - cy mild
 last - ing Lord: Late in time be - hold him come,
 Right - eous - ness! Light and life to all he brings,



God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!" Joy - ful, all you
 Off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb Veiled in flesh the
 Ris'n with heal - ing in his wings. Mild he lays his



na - tions, rise, Join the tri - umph of the skies;
 God - head see: Hail the in - car - nate De - i - ty,
 glo - ry by, Born that man no more may die,



With the an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 Pleased as man with men to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.
 Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them sec - ond birth.



Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King!"



Page one: Saint Mary's Catholic Church, Greenville, SC.

Page two: Gentile da Fabriano. *Nativity*. Florence. (1423).

Page eight: Duccio. *The Nativity with the Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel*. (c. 1308).

Page nine: Zanobi Strozzi. *The Adoration of the Magi*. (c. 1450).

Page thirteen: Bruno Piglhein. *Star of Bethlehem (digitally edited)*. (19th century).

Page fourteen: Charles Le Brun. *Adoration of the Shepherds*. (1689).

Page seventeen: Master of the Dominican Effigies. *The Nativity with the Annunciation to the Shepherds*. (c. 1340).

Page eighteen: Giotto. *Nativity*. Lower Church, San Francesco, Assisi. (1310).

Page nineteen: James Tissot. *The Adoration of the Shepherds*. (19th century).

from the office of readings for the solemnity of christmas

Dearly beloved, today our Savior is born; let us rejoice. Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; life brings us joy with the promise of eternal happiness.

No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. Our Lord, victor over sin and death, finding no man free from sin, came to free us all. Let the saint rejoice as he sees the palm of victory at hand. Let the sinner be glad as he receives the offer of forgiveness. Let the pagan take courage as he is summoned to life.

In the fullness of time, chosen in the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom, the Son of God took for himself our common humanity in order to reconcile it with its creator. He came to overthrow the devil, the origin of death, in that very nature by which he had overthrown mankind.

And so at the birth of our Lord the angels sing in joy: Glory to God in the highest, and they proclaim peace to his people on earth as they see the heavenly Jerusalem being built from all the nations of the world. When the angels on high are so exultant at this marvelous work of God's goodness, what joy should it not bring to the lowly hearts of men?

Beloved, let us give thanks to God the Father, through his Son, in the Holy Spirit, because in his great love for us he took pity on us, and when we were dead in our sins he brought us to life with Christ, so that in him we might be a new creation. Let us throw off our old nature and all its ways and, as we have come to birth in Christ, let us renounce the works of the flesh.

Christian, remember your dignity, and now that you share in God's own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition. Bear in mind who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Do not forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of God's kingdom.

Through the sacrament of baptism you have become a temple of the Holy Spirit. Do not drive away so great a guest by evil conduct and become again a slave to the devil, for your liberty was bought by the blood of Christ.

- From a sermon by Saint Leo the Great, pope
(b. 400; d. November 10, 461)

from the pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

On every Sunday and most other Solemnities of the Year, the texts for Mass are the same for both the vigil and the day of the celebration. For the celebration of Christmas, however, the Church provides four different Masses, each with its own Scripture readings and proper prayers, and this is testimony to the richness of this great feast. The four Masses for Christmas are the Vigil, Mass during the Night, Mass at Dawn, and Mass during the Day, and you can read all of the different texts for these four Masses in the missalette. Most of us, of course, never hear the readings proclaimed for the Mass at Dawn because we are still tucked warmly in our beds at that hour, but the lessons appointed for that Mass are filled with tender grace and so I encourage you to take time to read quietly and prayerfully the Gospel for the Mass at Dawn (Luke 2.15-20) and the second lesson, taken from Saint Paul's letter to Titus (Titus 3.4-7).

Along with Timothy, Titus was a disciple of and assistant to the Apostle Paul, and he was a Gentile Christian who traveled with Paul from Antioch to the Council of Apostles at Jerusalem and then accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey. Titus also served as the bearer of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, and in Corinth he took up a collection for the Christians in Jerusalem. At length, Titus became the founding Bishop of Crete and was charged by Saint Paul to organize the Church on that island by appointing other bishops and priests. Much of Paul's letter to Titus is a description of the qualities Titus should look for in candidates for the episcopate and presbyterate. Saints Timothy and Titus are venerated together in the sacred liturgy on January 26th.

During the Mass at Dawn, these words from Paul's letter to Titus are proclaimed, and they give voice to the heart of the Gospel: "Beloved, when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life." Through our Baptism, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are justified and saved by the Lord Jesus as a free and unmerited gift, and as we celebrate with joy the birth of our Savior, we give thanks for the merciful love of God which is our justification and righteousness. The Collect, or Opening Prayer, of the Mass at Dawn expresses this great mystery in these words:

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that as we are bathed in the new radiance of your incarnate Word, the light of faith which illumines our mind may also shine through in our deeds. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Father Newman