CHRISTMAS EVE AT ST. THOMAS

The Eve of the Feast of the Nativity
Festival Holy Eucharist
December 24, 2024 5:00 PM
St. Thomas Episcopal Church

Welcome to St. Thomas on this joyous Christmas Eve night! We are blessed to have you with us as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. If you are here for the first time, please fill out a visitor card located in the Narthex and drop it in the offering plate. **And to help everyone around you celebrate this Holy Night, please silence your cell phones now.**

Merry Christmas!

THE HOLY EUCHARIST RITE TWO

PRELUDE

HYMN IN PROCESSION

O Come, All Ye Faithful Hymn 83

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

OPENING ACCLAMATION BCP 355

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

COLLECT FOR PURITY

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 Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

Angels We Have Heard on High Hymn 96

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

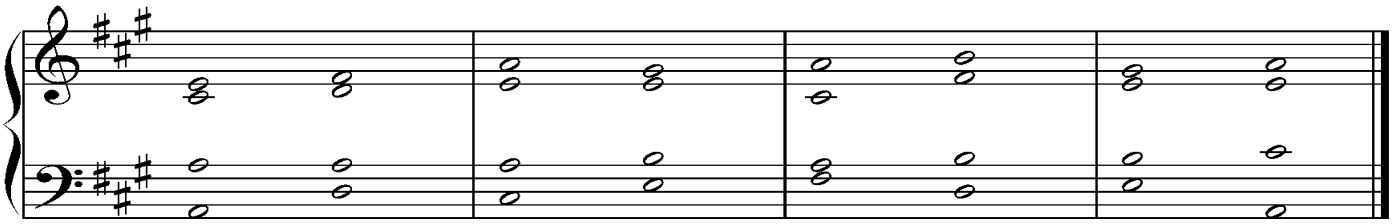
Please be seated

THE FIRST READING Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness-- on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

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

Psalm 96



1 Sing to the LORD a new `song; *
sing to the LORD, all the whole `earth.
2 Sing to the LORD and bless his `Name; *
proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to `day.
3 Declare his glory among the `nations *
and his wonders among all `peoples.
4 For great is the LORD and greatly to be `praised; *
he is more to be feared than all `gods.
5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but `idols; *
but it is the LORD who made the `heavens.
6 Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his `presence! *
Oh, the power and the splendor of his `sanctuary!
7 Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the `peoples; *
ascribe to the LORD honor and `power.
8 Ascribe to the LORD the honor due his `Name; *
bring offerings and come into his `courts.
9 Worship the LORD in the beauty of `holiness; *
let the whole earth tremble be`fore him.

10 Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is `King! *
he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with `equity."

11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
let the sea thunder and all that is `in it; *
let the field be joyful and all that is there`in.

12 Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy
before the LORD when he `comes, *
when he comes to judge the `earth.

13 He will judge the world with `righteousness *
and the peoples with his `truth.

THE SECOND READING — Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

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

SEQUENCE HYMN

Joy to the World — Hymn 100

THE GOSPEL — Luke 2:1-20

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

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is

born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

THE SERMON

The Rev'd Donavan Cain, Rector

Please stand

THE NICENE CREED

BCP 358

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 may remain standing or kneel

Father, on this holy night your Son was born among us, and Christians all over the world sing for joy; renew your Church and open our hearts that Christ may find in us a dwelling place prepared for himself.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

On this holy night, the angels sang of "Peace on earth and good will among men." We pray for the leaders of this country and all in authority, that they may work for peace and promote the well-being of all.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

On this holy night, the shepherds found the Christ Child lying in a manger, with the Blessed Virgin Mary and Joseph; bless our homes and families, and all those we love.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

The darkness of this night is scattered with the light of Christ's presence; bring comfort to all who suffer, who grieve, or who are alone.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

In the word made flesh, you have joined heaven and earth; keep in safety all those who have died and bring us all to the joys of heaven.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Celebrant

O Father of Mercy, whose Son Jesus took upon himself our nature, that he might bear our sorrows, be the companion of our journeys, and the forgiveness of our sins; pour out on us your Holy Spirit, that as Christ was born in our likeness, even so may we grow into his; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All stand

THE PEACE

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The ministers and people may greet one another in the name of the Lord, and then be seated.

THE LITURGY OF THE TABLE

ANTHEM

Gesú Bambino — Pietro Yon

Katherine Heim, soloist

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

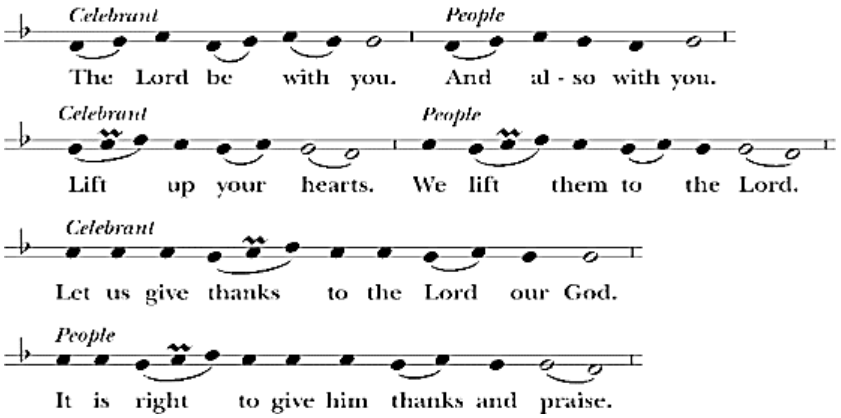
Masters In This Hall — David Willcocks

Please stand

PRESENTATION HYMN

Now yield we thanks and praise — Hymn 108

The Great Thanksgiving Eucharistic Prayer B — BCP 367



It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you gave Jesus Christ, your only Son, to be born for us; who, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, was made perfect Man of the flesh of the Virgin Mary his mother; so that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin, and receive power to become your children. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

SANCTUS

Hymn S-128

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The people stand or kneel. Then the Celebrant continues

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.

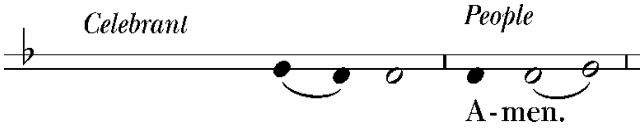
On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had 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;

The Celebrant continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine. We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, her husband, St. Thomas, our patron, 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.



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 BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The celebrant breaks the consecrated bread. A period of silence is kept.

FRACTION ANTHEM

Christ our Passover Hymn S-151

THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

All baptized Christians are welcome to receive communion in The Episcopal Church. If you do not wish to receive, you are welcome to receive a blessing. Come to the altar, cross your arms over your chest, and the clergy will provide a blessing. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request.

During communion candles will be handed out as people leave the altar.

COMMUNION HYMNS

What Child is This?	Hymn 115
Away in a manger	Hymn 101
The First Nowell	Hymn 109
It came upon the midnight clear	Hymn 89

POST COMMUNION PRAYER BCP 365

The people kneel, if able

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.

CHORAL MEDITATION

The Glory of the Father Egil Hovland

During the Meditation, the acolytes will light candles for the congregation.
The congregation is asked to remain kneeling, if able, for the reading of John's Gospel and Silent Night

A READING FROM THE PROLOGUE OF JOHN John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

HYMN

Silent Night Hymn 111

THE CHRISTMAS BLESSING

Celebrant May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of His Holiness.

People **Amen.**

Celebrant May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel.

People **Amen.**

Celebrant May God, who in the Word made flesh, joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor.

People **Amen.**

Celebrant And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever.

People **Amen.**

All stand

HYMN IN PROCESSION

Hark the herald angels sing Hymn 87

DISMISSAL

Please extinguish your candles and put them in the baskets on your way out of church.

POSTLUDE

The Holly and the Ivy Arr. Howard Cable

In Celebration of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the Glory of God the Christmas flowers are given by the following individuals and families:

In loving memory of Richard Strobel by Kay Strobel.
In honor of my grandchildren by Cecelia Miller.
In gratefulness for my children and grandchildren by Mary Elizabeth Marr.
In loving memory of Cecelia Lee Kittle Morford by Ted and Kelly Evans.
In loving memory of Louis H. Zabel from his wife Janice Zabel, sons, and grandchildren.
In memory of our beloved parents, Ivan and Thelma Hoath, from their four daughters Jancie Hoath Zabel, Cheryl, Karen, and Hazel.
In gratitude for my St. Thomas family by Evie Wilson.
In memory of Robert H. Evans by Marilyn Evans.
In memory of my dad Gerald Driste by Diane House.
To the glory of God and in thanksgiving for the St. Thomas community by Cynthia and Gregg Geis.
In prayerful expectation for the safe birth of Evelyn Amanda Steel by Alexander and Frances Steel.
In loving memory of Tom, our grandson Keith, and our parents and siblings who have gone before us by Janet McAlister.
In memory of my dear parents, Arthur and Imogene Lange, by Jacqueline Diot.
In memory of loved ones and to the Glory of God by Elga and George Krasts.
In memory of Elizabeth and Joe Massey and Martha and John Stucker by Elisa and Mark Stucker.
In memory and thanksgiving for the lives of Larry Meyer and Jean Cahill by Barbara Meyer.
In memory of our parents by Vern and Barbara Gehm.
In thanksgiving for our daughters Kristyn and Caroline by Martha and Peter Wilson.

The Christmas Eve Worship Team

Celebrant & Preacher	The Rev. Donavan Cain
Assisting Priest	The Rev. Katie Kirk-Costas
Deacon	The Rev. Jeannie Randall
Deacon	The Rev. Dave Drachlis
Director of Music	Katherine Heim
Organist/Pianist	Samuel Wright
Eucharistic Ministers	Kathie Clayton, Ellen Dodson
Acolytes	Luke Carrier, Ava Hughley, Harper Mohler, Dean Falco
Lectors	Audrey Cain, Bonnie Price
Ushers	Bryan Dodson and Bill Davenport
Greeters	Elisa & Mark Stucker

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venmo
@StThomasHsv

Use this venmo QR code to make direct donations to St. Thomas.

This QR code is just for newcomers!

Merry Christmas!

Pick up your annual Christmas ornaments for the young and young at heart in the Narthex.

Please join us…

Christmas Day: Wednesday, December 25th

10:00 am - Holy Eucharist with Carols

The First Sunday after Christmas: Sunday, December 29th

Regular Eucharist Schedule: 8am, 10:30am, and 5pm

NO breakfast (coffee will be available), Christian formation, or childcare

The Second Sunday after Christmas: Sunday, January 5th

Regular Eucharist Schedule: 8am, 10:30am, and 5pm

Breakfast & Rector's Forum between the morning Eucharists

6pm - Twelfth Night Burning of the Greens Celebration

Special Twelfth Night Procession from the Church to South Parking Lot at the conclusion of the 5pm Eucharist, followed by Hot Cocoa & King Cake

The Staff of St. Thomas

The Rev. Donavan Cain, Rector
dcain@stthomashuntsville.org
The Rev. Katie Kirk-Costas, Associate Rector
associate@stthomashuntsville.org
The Rev. Jeannie Randall, Deacon
jrann228@gmail.com
The Rev. David Drachlis, Deacon Associate
gulfcoastislander@gmail.com
Katherine Heim, Director of Music
music@stthomashuntsville.org
Samuel Wright, Organist
organist@stthomashuntsville.org
Laura Beth Bestor, Children's Ministry Coordinator
children@stthomashuntsville.org
Carey McIntyre, Communications Coordinator
communications@stthomashuntsville.org
Irene Smith, Administrative Assistant & Bookkeeper
stthomas@stthomashuntsville.org*; finance@stthomashuntsville.org*

2024 Vestry Members

George Harriman, Senior Warden, Ted Evans and David Hattaway, Junior Wardens
John Hanson, Donna Palumbo
Grace Casey, Kathie Clayton, Richard Williams
Tracy Ganem, Mark Mohler, Brett Tomlin, Peter Wilson
Wyn Patterson, Vestry Clerk Bob Thurber, Parish Treasurer

St. Thomas Episcopal Church Contact Information

Office: 256-880-0247 Website: www.stthomashuntsville.org

12200 Bailey Cove Road Huntsville, Alabama 35803

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 14509 Huntsville, Alabama 35815

Email: stthomas@stthomashuntsville.org