

Christ Episcopal Church

Sparta, NC

*A Home to All
Sharing God's Unconditional Love*



The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ

December 24, 2018

The Rt. Rev José McLoughlin
Bishop of Western North Carolina

The Rev. Stephanie E. Parker
Rector

Welcome to Christ Episcopal Church

We are delighted God has brought you to this special place. Our tradition is to invite newcomers to introduce themselves during the announcements, if they would like. Following the service, the ushers have guest cards which we hope you will fill out, so we can personally welcome you to the church community. Everyone is invited for refreshments and fellowship in the parish hall afterwards.

What do you need to know about worship? Everything you need for your worship today is in the booklet you are holding. Our service is based on the Book of Common Prayer, using music from sources including the Hymnal 1982 and Taizé.

Are you worshipping with us for the first time? We would love to get to know you! Please fill out one of the pew cards tucked into the pew in front of you. Let us know if we can call you, answer questions, or pray for you. And know that wherever you are on your journey of faith, there is a place for you at Christ Church.

Home communion visits: Do you know someone who isn't able to get to church, but would like a home communion visit? Please call the church office at 336.372.7983 to arrange a visit.

Please wear a name tag. No permanent one? Please use the blank name tags found in the church entryway. We're happy to make you a new nametag, a replacement, or simply a spare. For permanent name tags, email the church office at ccepiscopal@skybest.com.

Newsletter: Sign up today to receive our electronic newsletter, the weekly Good News & Notes. Email the church office at ccepiscopal@skybest.com.

Sermons Available Recent sermons available at www.christchurchallegghany.com.

Adult Formation at Christ Church includes an Adult Forum series Sunday morning at 9:00 am in the fellowship hall downstairs.

We extend special thanks today to:

Jonathan Halsey, for serving as musician and for being so generous with his talents, and

Bob & Fonda Hale, for the flowers at the altar in memory of their parents.

The Gathering

Prelude

Jonathan Halsey

All stand, as able.

Processional Hymn #83

O come, all ye faithful

Opening Acclamation

Presider Glory to God in the highest.

People **And peace to God's people on earth!**

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.

Hymn #96

Angels we have heard on high

Remain standing, as able.

The Collect of the Day

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider 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.**

All are seated.

The First Lesson

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.

Leader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn #87

Hark the herald angels sing

The Second Lesson

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.

Leader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand, as able.

Gospel Hymn #79

O little town of Bethlehem

Please remain standing, as able.

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

Luke 2:1-20

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.

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

All are seated.

Sermon

The Rev. Stephanie E. Parker

A time of silence is kept following the sermon.

Please stand, as able.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Rejoicing in the love of God that has taken flesh among us as Jesus Christ, let us confidently bring to the Lord the hopes of our heart during this Christmastide as we pray:

In this Wondrous Season,
Christ is born in us tonight.

For the human family throughout the world, especially those in positions of leadership and authority, that those who oppress, speak violence, or violate human rights may give way to those who will guide us with your grace and peace and spread God's justice and light to the ends of the earth,

In this Wondrous Season,
Christ is born in us tonight.

For the Church gathered throughout the world, that our love of the Word made flesh might lead us to actions that reflect his justice, mercy, and compassion.

In this Wondrous Season,
Christ is born in us tonight.

For those lost in the darkness of prejudice, hostility, and fear; for those burdened by the yoke of injustice, hunger, war, and marginalization; for all in need in this time, especially... that they may know the life and the light of God this Christmas.

In this Wondrous Season,
Christ is born in us tonight.

For those for whom this holy season brings sadness and grief, that they may know the deep comfort and your peace which passes all understanding; that their suffering may be held gently by your surrounding love, may we see and offer the gift of empathy as we are able.

In this Wondrous Season,
Christ is born in us tonight.

That the joy and mystery of the Christ's birth may be celebrated with thankfulness; we are especially thankful for ...

In this Wondrous Season,
Christ is born in us tonight.

Presider: God of life and light, you have pierced the veil of this life by the utterance of your word made flesh. May our words of praise and petition be strong echoes of your Christmas word, so that all might come to the peace you promise in Jesus, who is Lord and God forever. **Amen.**

The Peace

Presider The peace of Christ be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

Please greet one another in a way that is comfortable as a sign of our participation in Christ's reconciling work in the world.

Offertory

Jonathan Halsey

Offertory Hymn #99

Go tell it on the mountain

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

Presider All things come of thee, O Lord.
People **And of thine own have we given thee.**

The Great Thanksgiving

Please stand, as able.

Prayer B

BCP 367

Presider The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Presider Lift up your hearts.
People **We lift them to the Lord.**
Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

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.

Proper preference said here.

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: 129 (*sung by all*)

*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.*

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 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.

Stand or kneel, as able, for Prayer of Consecration.

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,

ALL **We remember his death,**
 We proclaim his resurrection,
 We await his coming in glory;

Presider 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 all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

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

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

The Lord's Prayer

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

A period of silence is kept.

Fraction Anthem: S154 (*sung by all*)

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
therefore let us keep the feast.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The Invitation to Communion

Presider: The gifts of God for the People of God; God's holy food, for God's holy people.

All who seek God and are drawn to Christ are welcome at the Lord's Table.

If you are gluten allergic, please ask for a rice wafer at the distribution.

What Child is This

*1. What Child is this who laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping.
This, this is Christ the King
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring Him laud
The Babe the Son of Mary.*

*3. So bring Him incense gold and myrrh
Come peasant king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise the song on high
The Virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born
The Babe the Son of Mary.*

*2. Why lies He in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian fear for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails spear shall pierce Him through
The cross be borne for me for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh
The Babe the Son of Mary.*

The First Nowell

*The first Noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.*

Refrain:

*Noel Noel Noel Noel
Born is the King of Israel*

*They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night. (Refrain)*

*And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from country far,
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went. (Refrain)*

*This star drew nigh to the northwest,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay. (Refrain)*

*Then entered in those wise men three
Full rev'rently upon the knee,
And offered there in His presence
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense. (Refrain)*

Surely the Presence of the Lord

*Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,
I can feel His mighty power and His grace,
I can hear the brush of angels' wings,
I see glory on each face.
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.*

Stand or sit, as able.

Post Communion Prayer

BCP 365

Presider Let us pray,

 Eternal God, heavenly Father,
 you have graciously accepted us as living members
 of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
 and you have fed us with spiritual food
 in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
 Send us now into the world in peace,
 and grant us strength and courage
 to love and serve you
 with gladness and singleness of heart;
 through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Candles will be lit as we let silence descend...

Kneel, as able, to sing by candle light.

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.*

*Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!*

*Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth. Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.*

The Blessing

Loving God, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

And may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be among you this night and always. Amen.

Please stand, as able.

Recessional Hymn #100

Joy to the world

The Dismissal

Presider Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.
People Thanks be to God, Alleluia, alleluia.

Postlude

Coming Lessons

Jeremiah 33:14-16
Psalm 25:1-9
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
Luke 21:25-36

Prayer List

Intercessions: Ben D., Chuck B., Jann B., Jim D., Jon, Julie O., Karleen, Laura D., Linda W., Stella D., and Ted Y.

Departed:

Birthdays: Jonathan Halsey (Dec 29)

Wedding Anniversaries: Joe & Judy Ritchie (Dec 25)

The Following People are Assisting with the Services

Role	Christmas Eve service	Next Sunday
Altar Guild	Marybeth Lentz	Jeanne Green
Chalicerist I	Jann Boggs	Jeanne Green
Chalicerist II	Bruce Smith	Nancy Wilson
Crucifer	Bruce Smith	Nancy Wilson
Lector I	Cynthia Grant	Barbara Halsey
Lector II	Jann Boggs	Jim Halsey
Prayers of the People	Cynthia Grant	Jann Boggs
Oblations Bearers	Marybeth Lentz	Phil Donaldson
Greeters/Ushers	Cynthia Grant	Jim & Barbara Halsey
Book Bearer	Jann Boggs	Jeanne Green
Sanctus Bell	Bruce Smith	Nancy Wilson

Schedule

Monday, December 24

9:00 pm – Christmas Eve service

Tuesday, December 25 and Wednesday, December 26 – The church office will be closed.

Wednesday, December 26

No morning service today

Sunday, December 30 – First Sunday of Christmas

9:00 am – Adult Forum

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist

Soup Sunday following the service

6:00 pm – Mountain Soul presents For His Glory

Announcements

Food & Fellowship Team announces Soup Sunday next Sunday, December 30th!

We will end 2018 with another soup luncheon while breaking bread together. Many thanks to Deb Donaldson for making this lunch possible.

Mountain Soul presents The Faithful Four THIS Sunday at 6:00 pm. *Read the GN&N for more details.*

Food & Fellowship Person of the Month for December is: Marybeth Lentz. She can be reached by telephone at 336.657.7088 or by email at mlentz@skybest.com.

Vestry Person of the Month for December is: Sheila Pfaender. She can be reached by telephone at 336.200.1164 or by email at sspfaender@gmail.com.

For any building or property issues, please contact: Phil Donaldson with your concerns.

Christ Episcopal Church

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Office hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-1:30 pm

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Prayers of the People adapted from Intercession for God's People. Gail Runshaw.

Today's bulletins are printed in color due to an anonymous donation.