

Eve of the Nativity

December 24, 2025 at Five O'clock P.M.



All Souls Episcopal Church

2300 Cathedral Ave—Washington, D.C.



The Rev. Sara E. Palmer, Rector

WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

Merry Christmas! We are thankful for your presence with us this evening and we invite you to join us as we worship God. The liturgy comes from the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and the music from the blue Hymnal 1982 and the beige African American Heritage Hymnal (AAHH). The “S” music is found in the service section in the front of the Blue Hymnal. All books are found in the pew racks.

Where the rubrics invite the people to stand or kneel, an individual may remain seated.

If you are a visitor, please fill out a visitor card and give to an usher.

Also, please introduce yourself to our rector, Mother Sara Palmer after the service.

She would love to meet you and learn your name!

She may be contacted at rector@allsoulsdc.org or 202-232-4244, ext. 2.

MISSION OF ALL SOULS

The mission of All Souls Church is to be a Christ-centered sanctuary where a diverse and inclusive community worships and serves. We live this mission through faithful celebration of the Eucharist, Christian education, and loving nurture of both members and neighbors.

CHRISTMASTIDE

The Church celebrates the Birth of Jesus Christ for **twelve days**, beginning on Christmas Eve and continuing through the Day of Epiphany, January 6. During this time we look for ways in which the “Word has become flesh” through sacrament, through word and song, and through silence.

CHRISTMAS CONTINUES

December 24	December 25
Christmas Eve, 8:30 pm	Christmas Day, 11 am
Holy Eucharist	Holy Eucharist
<i>with choir and organ</i>	<i>with organ, soloist and hymns</i>

December 28
Christmas I, 11 am
Holy Eucharist
with organ, soloist and hymns

January 4
Feast of the Epiphany, 11 am
Holy Eucharist
with organ and choir
allsoulsdc.org

photo on front cover:
*The Nativity—“On earth peace
good will toward men”* All Souls
church window in the Transept.

HOLY EUCHARIST



VOLUNTARY

The First Nowell

C.P.P. Burton (1916-1957)

INTROIT

Infant Lowly, Infant Holy

arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

*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, noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is Lord of all!
Christ the babe is Lord of all!*

*Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of the 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!*

arr. D. Willcocks (1919-2015)
Words: Piotr Skarga | Polish Carol

All stand.

HYMN 87 vs. 1-3 (*Blue Hymnal*)

All sing.

Hark! The herald angels sing

Mendelssohn

*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 hosts 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, offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate Deity.
Pleased as man with us to dwell; Jesus, our Immanuel.*

*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 Sun of Righteousness! Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
 Hark! the herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the newborn King"*

All sit.

HYMN 96 vs. 1, 2, 4 (*Blue Hymnal*)

Angels we have heard on high

Gloria

All sing.

*Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
 And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
 Glo-ri-a in excelsis Deo. Glo-ri-a in excelsis Deo.*

*Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing.
 Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
 Glo-ri-a in excelsis Deo. Glo-ri-a in excelsis Deo.*

*See him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise.
 Mary, Joseph, lend your aid while our hearts in love we raise.
 Glo-ri-a in excelsis Deo. Glo-ri-a in excelsis Deo.*

HYMN 101 vs. 1-3 (*Blue Hymnal*)

Away in a manger

Cradle Song

All sing.

*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 cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
 but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
 I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
 and stay by my side until morning is nigh.*

*Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
 close by me for ever, and love me I pray.
 Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
 and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.*

A WORD OF WELCOME

The Rev. Sara E. Palmer, Rector

PROCESSION TO THE MARY CHAPEL

*Everyone who is able and who wishes, is invited to move into the Mary Chapel by processing
 at the left side of the church and placing figures in the crèche while we sing the hymn.*

The hymn is repeated until all are around the crèche.

All sing.

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

After all the figures are placed in the crèche, the Celebrant says

Celebrant Dear friends, as we meet to celebrate the birth of Christ, let us pray that God might bless this crèche, that all who worship his Son, born of the Virgin Mary, may come to share his life in glory.

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People *And also with you*

Celebrant Let us pray.

God our Father, on this night thy Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary for us and for our salvation: bless this crèche, which we have prepared to celebrate that holy birth; may all who see it be strengthened in faith and receive the fullness of that life he came to bring, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. **Amen.**

Celebrant The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light;

People *They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, on them has the light shone.*

Celebrant For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given;

People *and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*

All return to their seats

ANTHEM

The Animals Christmas

Alice Parker (1925-2023)

Sung by Choir.

Poem by Mary Hitchcock

*Cattle low, roosters crow, Sheep bleat, and pigeons coo,
But on the morn our Lord as born They spoke as people do.*

Donkeys bray, horses neigh,

but in that lowly shed the creatures spoke like human folk round the holy infant's bed.

For one bright hour was given pow'r to every being there

To rejoice with human voice, to see the child so fair.

Dogs bow-wow, Cats meow, the mouse can only squeak,

But great or small, they all recall that long ago time in a cattle stall when the animals could speak.

THE GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-20

IN THOSE DAYS CAESAR AUGUSTUS ISSUED a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him

in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

HOMILY

The Reverend Sara Palmer, Rector

A brief time of silent reflection is kept after the sermon

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Leader Let us pray to Jesus our Savior.
Christ, born in a stable, give shelter to all who are homeless.
Silence. Jesus, Savior,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Leader Christ, for whom the angels sang, give comfort to all who weep.
Silence. Jesus, Savior,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Leader Christ, worshipped by the shepherds, give peace on earth to all who are oppressed.
Silence. Jesus, Savior,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Leader Christ, before whom the wise men knelt, give humility and wisdom to all who govern.
Silence. Jesus, Savior,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Leader Christ, whose radiance filled a lowly manger, give the glory of your resurrection to all who rest in you. *Silence.* Jesus, Savior,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Leader Jesus, Savior, child of Mary, you know us and love us, you share our lives and hear our prayer. Hear now our individual and specific prayers, for those we name aloud and those we name in the silence of our hearts. *Silence.*

The Celebrant adds a concluding collect.

O LORD OUR GOD, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

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.*

COMMUNION FROM THE RESERVED SACRAMENT

Celebrant and People

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully, in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

The Celebrant says the following Invitation:

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Take them in remembrance that Christ was born, died, and rose for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

All who desire to draw closer to God are invited to receive Holy Communion. If you do not wish to receive communion, you are invited to come to the altar for a blessing from the priest signifying this by crossing your arms over your chest.

COMMUNION ANTHEM

Sung by choir.

In the Bleak midwinter

Christina Rosetti (1830-1984)

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind 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, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven 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 breast full of milk, and a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels fall before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.*

*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.*

All sing.

vs. 1 *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.*

vs. 2 *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!*

vs. 3 *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.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Celebrant and People

Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

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 Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you, and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

HYMN 83 vs. 1, 3, 5 (Blue Hymnal)

O come all ye faithful

Adeste Fideles

All sing.

*O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come, and behold him, born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.*

*Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
glory to God, glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.*

*Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
we would embrace thee, with love and awe;
who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.*

DISMISSAL

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
People Thanks be to God.

VOLUNTARY

Improvisation

T. Andrew