

St. Anne's Episcopal Church
P.O. Box 134, 14 Treble Cove Rd.
N. Billerica, MA 01862

The Festival of Christmas Eve

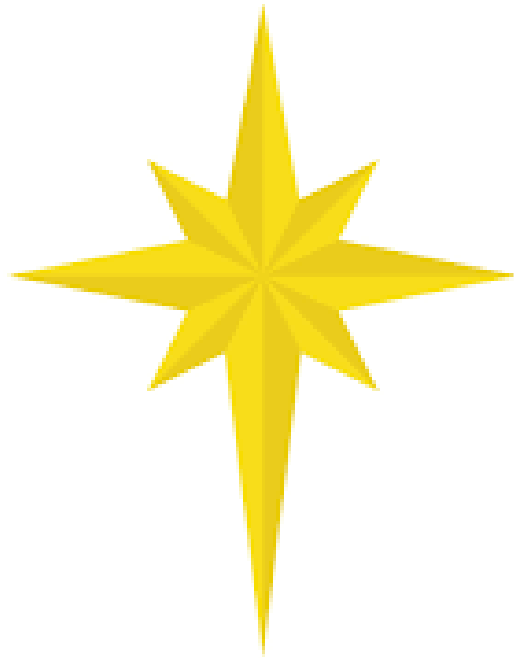
Service of Holy Eucharist



December 24, 2023
1:00 pm

If today is your first visit with us, welcome. We hope you will find peace and joy here.

Please visit our website for our live streamed and recorded services: stannes-billerica.org





The Holy Eucharist: Rite Two

(From The Book of Common Prayer. According to the use of The Episcopal Church, 1979. p. 355)

Christmas carols before the prelude

Angels, from the realms of glory

Away in a manger

Good Christian friends, rejoice

Prelude

Two Variations on 'Adeste, fidelis'

Hymnal 93, all verses

Hymnal 101, all verses

Hymnal 107, all verses

Thomas Adams
arr. Robert Gower

Please stand for the procession.

Entrance Procession

"O come, all ye faithful"

Hymnal 83

1. 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

2. God from God,
Light from Light eternal,
lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
only begotten
Son of the Father;

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord

3. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
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

(text by John Francis Wade, 1743, translated from Latin by Frederick Oakeley, 1841)

Welcome & Announcements

The Word of God

The people standing, the Celebrant says

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

People And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Celebrant says

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.*

Gloria

“Angels we have heard on high”

Hymnal 96

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

(French carol, translated by James Chadwick, 1860)

The Collect of the Day

The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray together.

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.

The Lessons

The people sit. The lessons, as appointed, are read, the Reader first saying

A Reading from the Book of 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.

*After each Reading, the Reader may say
The Word of the Lord.*

People Thanks be to God.

The Psalm

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 before 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 therein.
- 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.

A Reading from 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.

After each Reading, the Reader may say
 The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel

The Rev'd Jennifer D. Beal

Then, all standing, the Priest reads the Gospel, first saying
 The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
 according to Luke (2:1-14).

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

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!"

After the Gospel, the Reader says
The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Homily

The Rev'd Jennifer D. Beal

The Nicene Creed

All standing, say

**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 for Christmas

(From A Collection of Episcopal Prayers for Reconciliation and Justice from the Episcopal Church's Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music)

Deacon or other leader

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. *John 1:5*

You who fashioned this holy time with the radiance of the Christ Child, fill our hearts with the song of the angels that we may be makers and pursuers of peace.

Silence

Christ, be our light

Shine in our hearts.

You who framed the brightness of the first light in creation, dispel the arrogance, animosity, and anger that shatter the unity of your holy Church. Fill your faithful people with the radiant light of truth.

Silence

Christ, be our light

Shine in our hearts.

You who delivered your people from the misery of bondage in slavery to the land of promise, set us free from enslavement to division, disunity, and distrust in our public life and labor. Illumine those in authority with the light of vision.

Silence

Christ, be our light

Shine in our hearts.

You who patterned the stars and called the sun into being, who appointed the moon and chartered the cosmos, pattern the hearts of people everywhere to see in each other the beauty of the universe and the splendor of creation, that divisions of race, class, gender, and ethnicity may be recreated into one common humanity.

Silence

Christ, be our light

Shine in our hearts.

You who shower comfort and hope to the lowest, the lost, and the least, shower the light of compassion on the sick, the sorrowful, and the suffering [especially those on the St. Anne's Prayer List]. Help us to be your compassion and hope in the world.

Silence

Christ, be our light

Shine in our hearts.

You who welcome into the brilliant light of eternity those who have died, and all whose lives have been cut short by violence, warfare, or strife. Shine the light of hope.

Silence

Christ, be our light

Shine in our hearts.

You who delight in the complexity and splendor of creation, help us to delight in the diversity of this earth, our island home. Inspire your people to care for all you have made.

Silence

Christ, be our light

Shine in our hearts.

Presider

May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting, find us ever burning with the light of love, the spirit of truth, and the wellspring of hope. *Amen.*

Hear our prayers, Holy God. Breathe your Spirit over us and all the earth, that barriers would crumble and divisions cease. Make us more fully your co-healers of the broken world. Unite us with all people in bonds of love, that the whole earth and all its peoples may be at peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Confession of Sin

The Celebrant says

Let us confess our sins against God, our neighbors, and ourselves.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People

**Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

The Priest stands and says

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. *Amen.*

The Peace

All stand. The Celebrant says to the people

People The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Then the Ministers and People may greet one another in the name of the Lord, remaining in your pew as you signal a gesture of peace to one another.

The Holy Communion

Offertory Sentence

Ascribe to God the honor due that Name; bring
offering and come into these courts with praise. *Psalm 96:8*

As a way of minimizing touching shared objects, we have placed offering plates in both the front and rear of the church. We are very grateful for your gifts and offerings. You may leave them in the plates as you enter or leave our service of worship.

All who seek God are welcome at this table. May God find you here.

Offertory Hymn

“O little town of Bethlehem”

Hymnal 79

1. 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.

3. How silently, how silently,
the wondrous Gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

2. For Christ is born of Mary;
and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth!
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to men on earth.

4. Where children pure and happy
pray to the blessed Child,
where misery cries out to thee,
Son of the mother mild;
where charity stand watching
and faith holds wide the door,
the dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
and Christmas comes once more.

5. O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

(text by Phillips Brooks, former Bishop of Massachusetts, 1868)

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer B, BCP p. 367

The people remain standing. The Celebrant faces them and says

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 him thanks and praise.

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

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 say this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Celebrant and People

**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.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or to lay a hand 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.

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 St. Anne 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. *AMEN.*

Sanctus

Hymnal S130

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

People and Celebrant

**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. Then may be said

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People Therefore let us keep the feast.

Facing the people, the Celebrant says the following Invitation

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

The ministers receive the Sacrament, and then immediately deliver it to the people.

Please be seated.

Please come forward to the altar rail to receive Holy Communion when an usher indicates. You may cross your arms to receive a blessing if you wish. A gluten-free wafer is available. Holy Communion will be distributed in both kinds: distribution of the wafer by the priest from the paten to be followed by receiving wine from the Lay Eucharistic Minister's common Communion chalice. Intinction (by dipping one's own wafer and hand into the cup) will not be offered. HOWEVER, distribution of the single serve kits (container with wafer and wine) will continue. You can choose to only drink wine from the single-serve kit while leaving the host in the container. Our altar guild will reverently and properly dispose of the uneaten wafer. An usher will be at the bottom of the stairs to collect the empty container and napkin.

If you would like to receive a single-serve Communion kit in your seat, Mother Jennifer will gladly bring it to you.

All who seek spiritual nurture are welcome to receive this sacrament.

Communion hymn one "What child is this, who, laid to rest" Hymnal 115

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?

Refrain:
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary.

2. Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?

Good Christians, fear: for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading. (Refrain)
(text by William C. Dix, 1865)

Communion hymn two “The First Nowell”

Hymnal 109

1 The first Nowell 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:
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

2 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]

4 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]

6 Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood our life hath bought. [Refrain]

After Communion, please stand as the Celebrant says

Let us pray.

Celebrant and People

**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.**

The Priest may bless the people.

May Christ, who by his Incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. *Amen.*

The Celebrant dismisses them with these words

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People Thanks be to God.

Exit Procession

“Joy to the world! the Lord is come”

Hymnal 100

1. 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.

2. Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
let us our songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

(text by Isaac Watts, 1719)

Christmas gift

“Silent night, holy night”

Hymnal 111

**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.**

**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!**

**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.**

(text by Joseph Mohr, 1818, translated from German by John Freeman Young, 1863)

Please sit quietly until the organist has exited.

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As a way of minimizing touching shared objects, we have placed offering plates in both the front and rear of the church. We are very grateful for your gifts and offerings. You may leave them in the plates as you enter or leave our service of worship.

Merry Christmas!

Ministers today

Rector
Lector
Lay Eucharistic Minister
& Prayers of the People
Director of Music and Organist
Singers

The Rev'd Jennifer D. Beal
Ms. Michele O'Shea

Mr. Ron Desmarais
Mr. Peter Morelli
Ms. Maria Martin
Ms. Michele O'Shea
Mr. John Geen
Ms. Dotty Callihan
Ms. Sandra Giroux
Mr. Mark Komarinski

Acolyte
Ushers
Film Crew (Video)
Film Crew (Audio)

All are invited to join us in Bixby Hall for Silver Tea following this service.



Thank you to all who have contributed to the adornment of our sanctuary this Christmas.

The plants and greens which so beautifully adorn our church this Christmas season are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of:

- ❖ *Cal Callihan, Catherine Kneeland, & Elizabeth Delvental from Dorothy Callihan.*
- ❖ *Christopher Zarella, Shirley Zarella, Jose & Maria Cunha from Norm & MJ Zarella.*
- ❖ *Edith, Russel & Kenneth McCarthy from Dave & Kathy Brewster.*
- ❖ *Inez & Major Cousens, Alma & Francis Moran-Guevara from George & Genevieve Cousens.*
- ❖ *Family, friends & loved ones from Marie Figenbaum.*

- ❖ James Edward Holdman from Shirley Holdman.
- ❖ Loved ones from Bob & Linda Price, John & Sue Geen, John & Linda Kusnierz, Ron & Amy Desmarais.
- ❖ Our parents & siblings from Chick & Nancy Meech.
- ❖ Robert Peck & Gladys White from Judy Peck.
- ❖ Stephen Garrett from Jean Flight.



And, to the glory of God and in thanksgiving for:

- ❖ All the lives that have touched ours, especially David & Marsha Hering, & Carol & John MacKenzie, & Tina from Brenda & Mark Komarinski.
- ❖ Each other from Chick & Nancy Meech.
- ❖ Family & friends from John & Sue Geen, John & Linda Kusnierz, Ken & Rosemary Kinser.
- ❖ Our daughters Amanda & Carolyn, our grandchildren Kendall & Jared from Richard & Marguerite Massey.
- ❖ The whole parish of St. Anne's from Jennifer Beal.

Prayers for the Festival of Christmas Eve

December 24, 2023

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Diocese of Birmingham – The Church of England

Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East

Our Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin; Our Presiding Bishop, Michael; Our Bishops, Alan and Carol; Our Priest, Jennifer

St. Anne's Prayer List

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others

Anthony Vokey, Barbara Rogers & son Kevin, Brian Hering, Chick Meech, Chris Hering, Dale, Don, Donald Fudge, Frank Deloia, George Lyna, Janet Lyna, Janet Strong, Jean Flight, José Soreso, Joshua Young, Josy Hering, Kathy Chang, Lee Conley, Linda E., Lucy Ann Young & daughter Paula, Marie, Marie Horgan, Mary Lander, Michele O'Shea, Norm & MJ Zarella, Pat McCleave & granddaughter, Paul Hamner, Pete Jeffrey, Rebecca, Yaya & her family, Yvonne Hopkins. Also we pray for our local friends from Haiti and their children who may leave Billerica soon. We pray for the next step in their journey to what we all take for granted - normalcy and stability.

Announcements for December 24, 2023

- On Sunday, December 31, there will be a Christmas Lessons and Carols service at 9 am.
- Articles for the Parish Annual Report will be due to the church office on January 5, 2024. The Annual Meeting will be held on February 4, 2024, at 11:30 am.

A litany for Christmas 2023

For many years, Assistant Bishop Carol Gallagher has been writing a blog called [Mamabishop](#). During Advent through Epiphany it includes "letters" from Mary to her mother and to Elizabeth, often including a litany. The letter at Christmas is based on Luke 2 and will include the litany below.

In offering it, she says, "I invite you to enter this season with an open heart and a loud 'yes' when God invites us to go and serve, carrying the Incarnate Christ with us."

Wondrous Creator, source of all life
You bend yourself towards us in all seasons
Bringing light to our broken, hidden places
And joy in your constant, loving presence.
Lord, help us to carry your Incarnate love with us today.

We often stray away like lost sheep
We are afraid, covered in anxiety
We seek foolish solutions to our pain
Yet you lean in and seek us at all times.
Lord, help us to carry your Incarnate love with us today.

The world turns to violence and destruction
Yet You are our source of hope and freedom
You set the prisoners free and feed the hungry
And gather us all back home at your table.
Lord, help us to carry your Incarnate love with us today.

You turn our tears of sorrow into tears of joy
And open our hearts to new and abundant life.
Lord, help us to carry your Incarnate love with us today.

Dark skies and cold winds will not keep you away
You love us as good parents love their children.
Lord, help us to carry your Incarnate love with us today.

Oh Jesus, born in a humble and lonely place
Visit us in our simple hearts, open to you this day.
Lord, help us to carry your Incarnate love with us today. Amen.

—The Rt. Rev. Carol J.W.T. Gallagher



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Honoring the Pawtucket and Shawsheen peoples
Social Justice - a way to allow everyone to feel welcome and respected