



Church of the Nativity, Hamilton

Holy Eucharist

The Third Sunday of Advent

17 December 2023



WEB EDITION

Called to Life — Compelled to Love



The territory where the Church of the Nativity resides has long been tended by many Indigenous peoples including the Neutrals, the Mississauga, the Anishinaabe, and the Haudenosaunee. With them, we are members of the Dish with One Spoon wampum, and we will strive to live up to our responsibility as treaty members and respect the history, spirituality, and culture of the nations of this place and the heritage and gifts of Métis people.

May our actions be guided by our commitment to reconciliation.

All are welcome in the worship and fellowship of the Church of the Nativity.
May you find grace and hope in this service.

Streaming: Our principal services are streamed to YouTube. We try to minimize individuals' appearances on camera. The beginning of the streaming is marked with an announcement, and then the service will continue as follows.

Prelude

Music is offered to provide a time for quiet prayer and preparation.

A bell is rung, and the service begins.

Hark the Glad Sound! The Saviour Comes

**Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long:
let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.**

**Christ comes, the prisoners to release
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst;
the iron fetters yield.**

**Christ comes, the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and from the treasuries of grace
to bless the humble poor.**

**Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
thy welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's eternal arches ring
with thy beloved name.**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

Amen.

Pour down, O heavens, from above,
and let the skies rain down righteousness.

**Arise, shine; for your light comes,
and the glory of the Lord rises upon us.**

Though night still covers the earth
and darkness covers the nations,
**over us will the Lord arise,
over us will the glory of God appear.**

Pour down, O heavens, from above,
and let the skies rain down righteousness.

Lighting of Advent Candles

People, Look East! The Time Is Near ²

People, look east! The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch: When night is dim
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the star, is on the way.

Confession & Absolution ³

Everlasting God,
you love justice and you hate wrongdoing.
We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness
that make us reluctant to work against oppression.
We are complicit in systems of exploitation.
We choose comfort over courage.
We are careless with creation's bounty.
Look upon us with mercy.
Turn our hearts again to you.
Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways
for the sake of our waiting world.
Amen.

Hear these words of assurance:

God clothes you with garments of salvation
and covers you with robes of righteousness.

In the tender compassion of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all.

Amen.

The Collect ⁴

Let us pray.

God of light,

who sent the Baptist to offer hope and to face the world's scorn:

open our ears to hear the cries from the margins,

exposing our fears,

sharpening our vision and calling us to faith;

through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come;

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Unfolding the Scriptures

1st Reading

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

The spirit of the LORD God is upon me,

because the LORD has anointed me;

he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,

to bind up the broken-hearted,

to proclaim liberty to the captives,

and release to the prisoners;

to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour,

and the day of vengeance of our God;

to comfort all who mourn;

to provide for those who mourn in Zion—

to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the LORD God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

Isaiah 61.1—4, 8—11

Listen for the leading of the Spirit.
Thanks be to God.

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.

**Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

Then they said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”

**The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.**

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses of the Negev.

**Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.**

Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

2nd Reading

A reading from the first letter to the followers of Jesus in Thessaloniki.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

1 Thessalonians 5.16—24

Listen for the leading of the Spirit.

Thanks be to God.

Pre - pare the way of the Lord, pre -
 pare the way of the Lord, and all peo-ple will
 see the sal - va - tion of our God. Pre

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Saint John.

♪ **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.** ♪

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.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, ‘I am not the Messiah.’ And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ Then they said to him, ‘Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’ He said,

‘I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
 “Make straight the way of the Lord”’,
 as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, ‘Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?’ John answered them, ‘I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the

thong of his sandal.’ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

John 1.6—8, 19—28

The Gospel of Christ.

♪ **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.** ♪

Homily

During the homily, Matthew will share a choral anthem. Based on today’s gospel text, it was composed by Orlando Gibbons. The manuscript has been dated to between 1625—40.

The English text of the anthem reads:

This is the record of John,
when the Jews sent priests and Levites
from Jerusalem to ask him,
Who art thou?
And he confessed and denied not, and said plainly,
I am not the Christ.

And they asked him, What art thou then? Art thou Elias?
And he said, I am not.
Art thou the prophet?
And he answered, No.

Then said they unto him,
What art thou?
that we may give an answer unto them that sent us.
What sayest thou of thyself?
And he said, I am the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,
Make straight the way of the Lord.

We say together in faith

**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.**

We believe in God the Father, who created all things:
for by his will they were created and have their being.

We believe in God the Son, who was slain:
**for with his blood, he purchased us for God,
from every tribe and language, from every people and nation.**

We believe in God the Holy Spirit:
**the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'
Even so come, Lord Jesus! Amen.**

The Prayers of the People

✠ Merciful God,
✠ **receive our prayer.**

The Peace

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

Feasting at the Table

Offertory Hymn # 97

Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring⁷

Jesus came, the heavens adoring,
came with peace from realms on high.
Jesus came for our redemption,
lowly came on earth to die:
alleluia, alleluia! came in deep humility.

Jesus comes again in mercy,
when our hearts are bowed with care.
Jesus comes again in answer
to our earnest heart-felt prayer,
alleluia, alleluia! comes to save us from despair.

Jesus comes to hearts rejoicing,
bringing news of sins forgiven.
Jesus comes in sounds of gladness,
leading souls redeemed to heaven.
Alleluia, alleluia! Now the gate of death is riven.

Jesus comes on clouds triumphant,
when the heavens shall pass away.
Jesus comes again in glory:
let us then our homage pay,
alleluia, alleluia! till the dawn of endless day.

If you wish to make a monetary gift, you can do so at any time by mailing a cheque to the church (1831 King Street East, Hamilton, ON L8K 1V8) or via e-transfer to donations.nativity@gmail.com

Prayer over the Gifts⁸

God our provider,
by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth.
Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty.
Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people,
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving⁹

May God be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Worship and praise belong to you, God our maker.
Out of nothing, you called all worlds to be,
and still you draw the universe to its fulfilment.
Dawn and evening celebrate your glory till time shall be no more.

In Christ your Son the life of heaven and earth were joined,
sealing the promise of a new creation, given, yet still to come.

Taught by your Spirit,
we who bear your threefold Likeness look for the City of Peace
in whose light we are transfigured and the earth transformed.

As children of your redeeming purpose who await the coming of your Son,
we offer you our praise,
with angels and archangels and the whole company of heaven
singing the hymn of your unending glory:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,

Lord God of power and might,

heav'n and earth are full,

full of your glor - ry.

Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na,

ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed is the One who comes,

who comes in the name of the Lord.

Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na,

ho - san - na in the high - est.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of power and might,
heav'n and earth are full, full of your glory.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the One who comes, who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

Glory and thanksgiving be to you, most loving God.
Our hope is built on Jesus,
the first, the last, the living one.
Obedient, even to accepting death,
Jesus opened the gate of glory
and calls us now to share the life of heaven.

Before Jesus was given up to suffering and death,
alight with the vision of a feast that heralded a kingdom yet to come,
at supper with his disciples he took bread and offered you thanks.
He broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying:
“Take, eat. This is my Body: it is broken for you.”

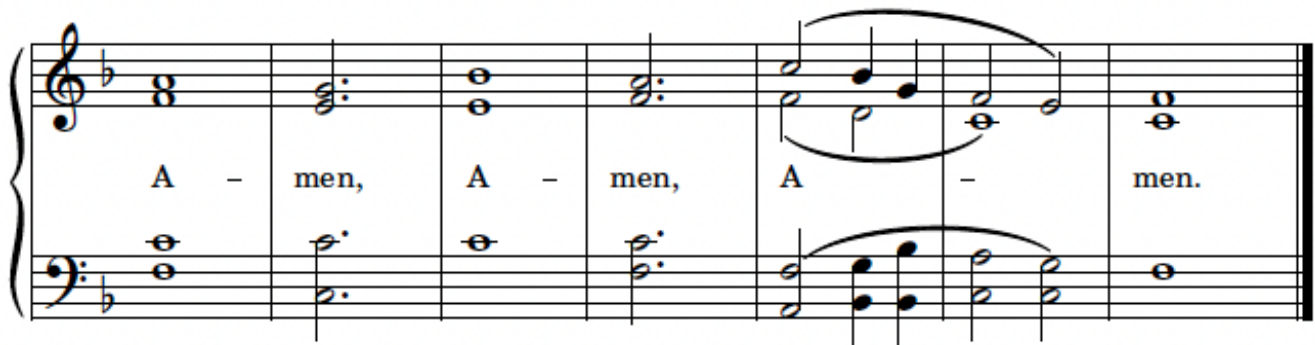
After supper, he took the cup, he offered you thanks,
and gave it to them saying:
“Drink this, all of you.
This is my Blood of the new covenant;
it is poured out for you, and for all, that sins may be forgiven.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

We now obey your Son's command.
**We remember his death,
we proclaim his resurrection,
we await his coming in glory;**

Made one with him,
we offer you these gifts and with them ourselves,
a single, holy, living sacrifice.
Hear us, most gracious God,
and send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon this bread and this wine,
that, overshadowed by his life-giving power,
they may be the Body and Blood of your Son,
and we may be kindled with the fire of your love
and renewed for the service of your reign.

Help us, who are baptised into the fellowship of Christ's Body
to live and work to your praise and glory;
may we grow together in unity and love until at last, in your new creation,
we enter into our heritage in the company of the Virgin Mary,
the apostles, and prophets,
and of all our brothers and sisters living and departed.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be to you, Lord of all ages,



Amen, Amen, Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit,
let us pray as Jesus teaches us in the language and version of our comfort:

Our Father

in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power, and the glory
are yours, now and for ever.

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,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

We keep silent and pray for a short time.

The Breaking of the Bread ¹⁰

God of promise,
you prepare a banquet for us in your reign of justice and peace.
Happy are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb.

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together.
Come, take your place at the table.
Thanks be to God!

Communion

All who are unable to be physically present to receive the eucharist may wish to pray one of the following prayers of reception for spiritual communion ¹¹:

I worship and adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, present in bread and wine, and present in your people, who are gathered in spirit. In this moment I join with them to receive you in my heart, and in our community. May you, enthroned on the altar, be now enthroned in my heart; may you, present in bread and wine, feed and renew my soul; may you, who gives yourself to us again, fill us with grace, and heavenly blessing. Even as I am fed, may my hunger for you and for your reign of justice and peace increase, that I may, with your Spirit, work for that day when your kingdom shall come on earth as it is heaven. Amen.

or

Come, Lord Jesus, and make in my heart your dwelling place and home. I seek to love you with all my heart, mind, soul and strength, and so, through your presence in bread and wine I receive you afresh and praise you for you are my God. As you fill me, so may my love for you and for all your people, rise and overflow, that with joy and thanksgiving I may serve you in the world you love. Amen.

or

Jesus, I believe that you are present with us in the sacrament of bread and wine. I love you and I desire your presence afresh in my life. Since I cannot now receive the bread and wine of the altar, come spiritually into my heart. I embrace you and unite myself to you; never let me be separated from you. Amen.

How the World Longs for Your Birth¹²

**How the world longs for your birth,
bearing news of human worth;
to our labour bring your mirth,
Maranatha, come, Lord, come.**

**How the earth awaits your seed,
parched and barren from our greed;
now to hallow it we need:
Maranatha, come, Lord, come.**

**How we ache to know your peace;
wars and weapons still increase;
bid our fears and hate to cease:
Maranatha, come, Lord, come.**

**How our minds for healing long,
broken bodies to be strong,
wounded hearts to learn your song:
Maranatha, come, Lord, come.**

**God, who sets your people free,
God, who comes, our flesh to be,
now we wait, your reign to see:
Maranatha, come, Lord, come.**

**To our darkness bring your light;
fill our longing eyes with sight.
In our lives shine ever bright:
Maranatha, come, Lord, come.**

Prayer after Communion ¹³

Generous God,
in bread and cup
you have revealed your glory for all people to see together.
Nourished by this meal,
send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release,
brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

Doxology ¹⁴

Glory to God,
**whose power, working in us,
can do infinitely more
than we can ask or imagine.**
**Glory to God from generation to generation,
in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Parish Announcements

Blessing

Hail to the Lord's Anointed ¹⁵

**Hail to the Lord's anointed, great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free,
to take away transgression, and rule in equity.**

**He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth,
and love, joy, hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth.
Before him on the mountains shall peace the herald go,
and righteousness in fountains from hill to valley flow.**

**Kings shall fall down before him, and gold and incense bring;
all nations shall adore him, his praise all people sing.
To him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend,
his kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.**

**O'er every foe victorious, he on his throne shall rest,
from age to age more glorious, all-blessing and all-blest.
The tide of time shall never his covenant remove.
His name shall stand for ever: that name to us is Love.**

Dismissal

As we await our coming Saviour, go in the peace of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Your Daily Prayers are Requested:

For the Church:

our Bishop: † Susan;
our diocese: all the people of the Diocese of Niagara;
diocesan cycle: St. John, Jordan;
wider: Anne, our metropolitan archbishop;
Linda, our primate;
The Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea;

For those in our parish cycle of prayer:

Joan;
Jen;
Bill & Mary;

For the needs of the world:

For peace:

for the people of Israel & Palestine;
for all fleeing genocide in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh);
for an end to the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia;
for Ukraine, Sudan, South Sudan;
and for all places and people in conflict

For those we know in need of healing

For those who have died, and those who mourn:

**Thank you for your daily prayers
for the people, worship, fellowship, and ministries
of the Church of the Nativity**



The Church of the Nativity

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Parish Deacon
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Mrs. Jan Collinson
Mr. David Eccles

Wardens

Sources

Our cover image this morning is a mural John baptizing Jesus, from the Church of Enda Yesus, in Axum, Ethiopia. The picture was taken by Dr. Adam Jones, and is used under the CC BY 2.0 DEED license. <https://flickr.com/photos/41000732@N04/8701117241>

¹ Text: Philip Doddridge (1702—51), alt. Music: Thomas Ravenscroft (1590?—1634?), *Whole Book of Psalmes*, 1621. Used under OneLicense A-604280.

² Text: Eleanor Farjeon (1881—1965). © David Higham Associates Ltd. Music: Melody French trad.; harm. Martin Shaw (1875—1958), alt. © Oxford UP.

³ *Sundays and Seasons*.

⁴ *Opening Prayers*. Quoted in *Alternative Collects* (2019) from the Anglican Church of Canada.

⁵ *A Liturgical Psalter* (2016). General Synod from the Anglican Church of Canada.

⁶ *Common Worship*, The Church of England. cf. Revelation 4.8, 11; 5.9; 22.17, 20.

⁷ Text: Godfrey Thring (1823—1903), alt. Music: Melody John Francis Wade (1711—86); harm. attrib Francis Vincent Novello (1781—1861), alt. Used under OneLicense A-604280.

⁸ *Sundays and Seasons*.

⁹ Eucharistic Prayer 2. *The Scottish Liturgy*, 1982. The Scottish Episcopal Church.

¹⁰ *Book of Alternative Services*, alt.

¹¹ Selected from the prayers provided for this use in “A Celebration of the Holy Eucharist with Spiritual Communion,” Diocese of Niagara, 2020.

¹² Text: Anna Briggs (1947—). ©. Music: singing to Tune *MOZART*, composer unknown. Used under OneLicense A-604280.

¹³ *Sundays and Seasons*.

¹⁴ *Book of Alternative Services*.

¹⁵ Text: James Montgomery (1771—1854), alt. Music: Melody Johann Crüger (1598—1662); adapt. William Henry Monk (1823—89). Used under OneLicense A-604280.