

Trinity Episcopal Church

Cranford, in the Diocese of New Jersey



"The Dream of Saint Joseph" – Domingo Martinez

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Holy Eucharist ~ Rite II

December 21, 2025 at 10 AM



The Reverend Andrew David Kruger ~ Rector & Presider

Anthony J. Rafaniello ~ Director of Music & Organist

Casey Woodruff ~ Senior Warden & Thomas Kaercher ~ Junior Warden

I. Gathering of God's People

Handbell Prelude

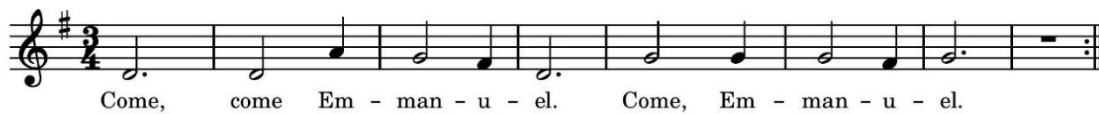
'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime – arr. Cathy Moglebust

The bell is rung and the People kneel.

Advent Gathering Song

James Chepponis

The People sing the chant and the Cantor sings the verses.



1. God will give us a sign, so...
2. For a child from the virgin will...
3. And his name will be Jesus, so...
4. Oh the King of glory shall...
5. He will save us from sin, so...
6. For the son of God will...

Acclamation

Book of Common Prayer 128

Presider O God, make speed to save us:

People **O Lord, make haste to help us.**

Preparatory Prayer

New Zealand Prayer Book

Presider Let us pray.

The People stand and say together

God of love, you chose the blessed virgin Mary to be the mother of your only Son; grant that we who have been redeemed by his blood, may share with her the glory of your eternal kingdom; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lighting the Advent Candle

CS

The Lector says

Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent, when we marvel at Mary's gracious acceptance of her divine pregnancy. We light this candle to remind us that, with Mary, we carry the light of Christ in us.

The fourth Advent Candle is lit.

Ky-ri-e e-le-i-son, Ky-ri-e e-le-i-son, Ky-ri-e e-le-i-son

Chri-ste e-le-i-son, Chri-ste e-le-i-son, Chri-

ste e-le-i-son, e-le-i-son, Ky-ri-e e-le-i-son,

Ky-ri-e e-le-i-son, Ky-ri-e e-le-i-son, e-le-i-son.

Collect of the Day

BCP 212

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The People sit.

Blessing of the Sunday School Children and Teachers

Andrew Kruger

Presider May God bless you as you prepare to enact again the coming of our Savior,

✠ in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

II. Proclaiming and Receiving the Word of God**First Reading**

Isaiah 7:10-16

Reader A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the LORD himself will give you a sign.

Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

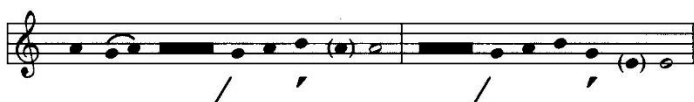
Qui regis Israel

Plainsong Psalter

All sing the Antiphon and Psalm.



Stir up your strength, O LORD, and come to help us.



TONE IV.4

- 1 *Hear, Ö* Shepherd of Israel, leading / Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned / upon the chérubim.
- 2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, / and Manásseh, *
stir up your strength / and come to hélp us.
- 3 Restore / us, O Gód of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we sháll be saved.
- 4 —/O LORD Gód of hosts, *
how long will you be angered
despite the / prayers of your péople?
- 5 You have fed them / with the bréad of tears; *
you have given / them bowls of téars to drink.
- 6 You have made us the derision / of our néighbors, *
and our en/emies laugh ús to scorn.
- 7 Restore / us, O Gód of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we sháll be saved.
- 16 Let your hand be upon the man / of your ríght hand, *
the son of man you have / made so strong fór yourself.
- 17 And so will we never / turn awáy from you; *
give us life, that we may / call upon yóur Name.
- 18 Restore us, / O LORD Gód of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we sháll be saved. [Ant.]

Second Reading

Romans 1:1-7

Reader A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; to all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Proclaiming Hymn

Besançon Carol

Wonder, Love & Praise 724

1. Peo - ple, look East. The time is near of the crown-ing of the
2. Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is plant - ed
3. Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be
4. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall
5. An - gels, an - nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who brings new life to

1. year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble, trim the hearth and set the
2. there: give up your strength the seed to nour - ish, that in course the flow'r may
3. filled. E - ven the hour when wings are fro - zen God for fledg - ling time has
4. brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er, bright as sun and moon to -
5. earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley hum-ming with the word, the Lord is

1. ta - ble. Peo-ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the guest is on the way.
2. flour-ish. Peo-ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the rose is on the way.
3. cho - sen. Peo-ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the bird is on the way.
4. geth - er. Peo-ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the star is on the way.
5. com-ing. Peo-ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the Lord is on the way.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 1:18-25

Presider ✠ The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Matthew.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

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

III. Responding to the Proclaimed Word of God

Homily

Andrew Kruger

Welcoming of Parents and Sponsors

Book of Occasional Services 172

The Presider invites forward the parents and sponsors of Reese Louise Rydelek and addresses them.

Presider What do you seek for yourself and your child?

Answer Life in Christ.

Presider Jesus said, “The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.” Do you accept these commandments?

Answer I do.

Presider In baptism, you died with Christ to the forces of evil and rose to new life as members of his Body. Will you study the commitments of baptism, and strive to keep them in the companionship of this community?

Answer I will, with God’s help.

Presider Will you open your heart and mind to receive anew the Good News of Jesus Christ?

Answer I will, with God’s help.

Presider Will you be regular in attending public worship, to hear the Word of God and celebrate the mystery of Christ's dying and rising?

Answer I will, with God's help.

Presider Will you join us in our life of service to the powerless and the outcast?

Answer I will, with God's help.

Presider Will you work for mercy and justice?

Answer I will, with God's help.

The Presider then addresses the assembled People

Will you support these persons by your prayer and example, and help them to grow in the knowledge and love of God?

People **We will.**

The Presider extends hands over the parents and sponsors and says

May God, our heavenly Father, grant you the power of the Holy Spirit to grow in faith and understanding that you may lead this child in the way of Christ. **Amen.**

The child is presented by name to the Presider, who, with the thumb, marks a cross on the forehead, saying

Reese, receive the sign of the Cross on your forehead and in your heart, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The parents then write their child's name in the book and return to their seats.

The Apostles' Creed

BCP 496

All standing, the Presider introduces the Creed with these words

In the assurance of eternal life given at Baptism, let us proclaim our faith and say,

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

CW alt.

The Presider says

Awake and alert for the advent of our Lord, let us pray for the grace to embrace the gentle rule of Christ.

The intercessor prays

Holy God, from whom the Spirit proceeds, empower your church, especially Sean, our Presiding Bishop; Sally, our Bishop; Andrew, our Priest; and all lay leaders so that they will reveal Christ's reign of justice and mercy in us, through us, and among us.

Come, Lord Jesus. **Amen. Maranatha.**

Holy God of wisdom and might, guide all people in positions of leadership, especially Donald, our President; Philip, our Governor; and Terrence, the mayor of this town; so that they will exercise their power for the common good.

Come, Lord Jesus. **Amen. Maranatha.**

Holy God, by whose word the cosmos was created, fill us with awe when we encounter the work of your hands so that we will tread gently and reverently on this good earth.

Come, Lord Jesus. **Amen. Maranatha.**

Holy God of compassion and love, bind up the broken-hearted, restore the sick and raise up the fallen.

Come, Lord Jesus. **Amen. Maranatha.**

Holy God, the source of light, let the radiance of God's coming dawn on all who live in darkness and the shadow of death.

Come, Lord Jesus. **Amen. Maranatha.**

Holy God of time and eternity, may we with all the saints in light shine forth as lights of the world.

Come, Lord Jesus. **Amen. Maranatha.**

The Presider adds the concluding collect.

Almighty Father, your Son came to us in humility as our savior, and at the last day he will come again in glory as our judge: Give us grace to turn away from darkness to the light of Christ that we will be ready to welcome him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Peace

BCP 360

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

The People greet one another in the Name of the Lord.

Announcements

Andrew Kruger

IV. Celebrating at the Lord's Table

Offertory Sentence

Romans 13:11

Presider The hour has come for you to wake from sleep.
For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

Representatives of the congregation bring the people's offering of bread and wine to the Holy Table.



*The Ushers pass the collection plates among the people.
Another option is to give to Trinity online –
scan the QR code and go directly to our Breeze link.*

Offertory Anthem

“Ubi Caritas” – Ola Gjeilo

Ubi caritas et amor Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Exsultemus et in ipso jucundemur
Timeamus et amemus Deum vivum.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.
Amen.

*Where charity and love are, God is there.
The love of Christ has gathered us together.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Let us revere and love the living God.
And from a sincere heart let us love one another.
Amen.*

The ushers bring the collection plates and the gifts for St. John's to the ministers and the People stand.

Offertory Hymn

Woodlands

Hymnal 438

1 Tell out, my soul, the great-ness of the Lord!
2 Tell out, my soul, the great-ness of his Name!

Un - num - bered bless - ings give my spi - rit voice;
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;

ten - der to me the prom - ise of his word;
his mer - cy sure, from age to age the same;

in God my Sa - vior shall my heart re - joice.
his ho - ly Name— the Lord, the Might - y One.

St John's Offertory Prayer

Presider Let us pray.

**Generous God, we present these gifts for St John's,
a symbol of the work you have given us to do;
use them, and use us, in the service of your world
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Presentation of Gifts

An Anglican Prayer Book 1989

Presider Source of all life, everything in heaven and on earth is yours:

People **All things come from you, and of your own do we give you. Amen.**

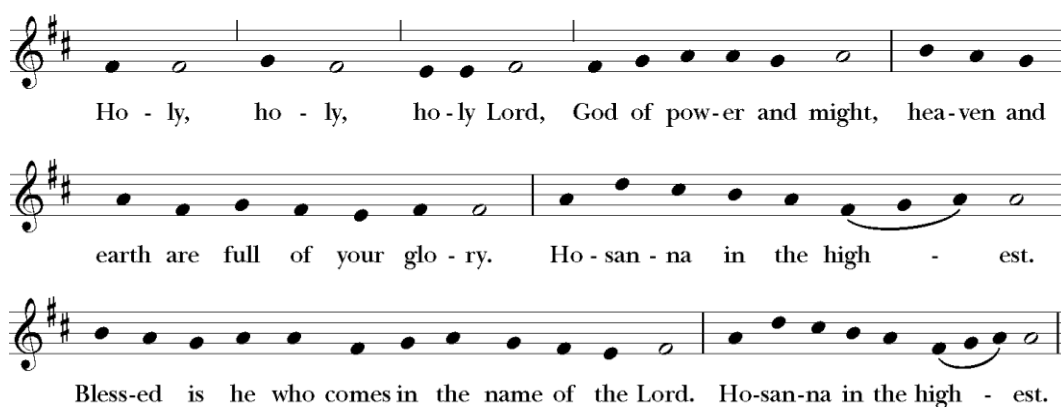
Eucharistic Prayer for Advent

Scottish Episcopal Church, 1982 alt

<p><i>Presider</i></p>  <p>The Lord be with you.</p>	<p><i>People</i></p>  <p>And al - so with you.</p>
<p><i>Presider</i></p>  <p>Lift up your hearts.</p>	<p><i>People</i></p>  <p>We lift them to the Lord.</p>
<p><i>Presider</i></p>  <p>Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.</p>	
<p><i>People</i></p>  <p>It is right to give our thanks and praise.</p>	

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 sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

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:



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

Before he 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 gave 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, again 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."

Presider We obey your Son's command:

People **We recall Christ's blessed passion and death.**

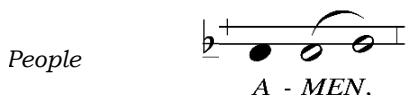
We celebrate Christ's glorious resurrection and ascension.

We look for the coming of Christ's Kingdom.

Made one with Christ, we offer you these gifts, and with them we offer ourselves, a single, holy, living sacrifice. Hear us, most merciful Father, and send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon this bread and this wine. By the Spirit's life-giving power may they be for us the Body and Blood of your Son, and kindled by the fire of your love, may we be renewed for the service of your Kingdom.

Make us grow together in unity and love until at last, in your new creation, we enter our true eternal home, where with Mary the mother of our Lord, and the holy ancestors of every generation we will worship you in glory everlasting.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever.



The Lord's Prayer

BCP 364

Presider 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.**

Breaking of the Bread

BCP 364

The Presider breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Agnus Dei

David Hurd

Hymnal S 161

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world:
have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sins of the world: have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Invitation

BCP 364

Presider The Gifts of God:
People **for the People of God.**

The ushers guide the people to receive Holy Communion. All who hunger for God, including children, are cordially invited to share the Gifts of God offered at this table.

Whoever you are, wherever you are in your life's journey, you are welcome here.

All persons may, but no person must, receive communion in both kinds to receive the full spiritual benefits of communion. Wine is offered by way of a sip from the common cup. You may choose to receive only the host. Gluten-free wafers are available by request to the priest.

First Communion Hymn

Conditor alme siderum

Hymnal 60

1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night,
 2 In sor - row that the an - cient curse
 3 When this old world drew on toward night,
 4 At your great Name, O Je - sus, now
 5 Come in your ho - ly might, we pray,
 6 To God the Fa - ther, God the Son,

1 your peo - ple's ev - er - last - ing light,
 2 should doom to death a u - ni - verse,
 3 you came; but not in splen - dor bright,
 4 all knees must bend, all hearts must bow;
 5 re - deem us for e - ter - nal day;
 6 and God the Spi - rit, Three in One,

1 O Christ, Re - deem - er of us all,
 2 you came, O Sa - vior, to set free
 3 not as a mon - arch, but the child
 4 all things on earth with one ac - cord,
 5 de - fend us while we dwell be - low
 6 praise, hon - or, might, and glo - ry be

1 we pray you hear us when we call.
 2 your own in glo - rious li - ber - ty.
 3 of Ma - ry, blame - less mo - ther mild.
 4 like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.
 5 from all as - saults of our dread foe.
 6 from age to age e - ter - nal - ly.

Second Communion Hymn

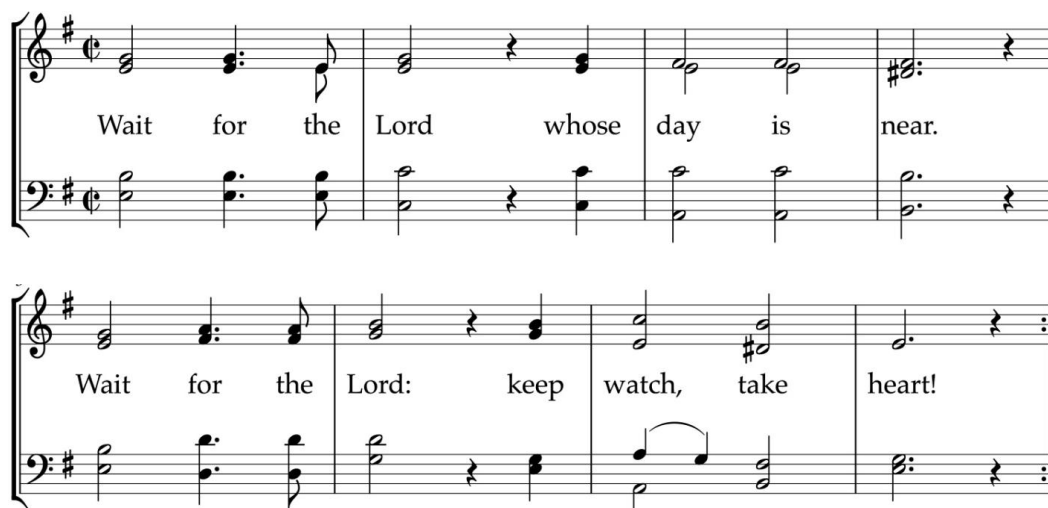
Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

Hymnal 54

1 Sa - vior of the na - tions, come! Vir - gin's
 2 Won - drous birth! Oh, won - drous child of the
 3 Thus on earth the Word ap - pears, grac - ing
 4 Come, O Fa - ther's sav - ing Son, who o'er

1 Son, make here your home. Mar - vel now, both
 2 Vir - gin un - de - filed! Might - y God and
 3 his cre - a - ted spheres; hence to death and
 4 sin the vic - tory won. Bound - less shall your

1 heaven and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.
 2 Ma - ry's son, ea - ger now his race to run!
 3 hell de - scends, then the heav - ly throne a - scends.
 4 king - dom be; grant that we its glo - ries see.



1. Prepare the way for the Lord. Make a straight path for God. (Is. 40)
2. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed. All the earth will see the Lord. (Is. 40)
3. Rejoice in the Lord always: God is at hand. Joy and gladness for all who seek the Lord. (Phil. 4, Ps. 70)
4. I waited for the Lord. God heard my cry. (Ps. 39)
5. Our eyes are fixed on the Lord our God. (Ps. 122)
6. Seek first the Kingdom of God. Seek and you shall find. (Matt. 6-7)
7. O Lord, show us your way. Guide us in your truth. (Ps. 118)

Post-communion Prayer

Celebrating Sunday

Presider Let us pray.

The People stand.

**Holy God, you draw near to us in word and sacrament
to strengthen and renew us.**

**Kindle in us the fire of your Spirit,
may your light so shine through us
that all may welcome your Son at his coming.**

We ask this in the name of Jesus our Emmanuel.

Amen.

Blessing

CW

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the darkness from your path
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory:
And the blessing of God almighty,
✠ the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you, and remain with you always.

Amen.

V. Going out as God's People

Sending Hymn

Veni, veni, Emmanuel

Hymnal 56

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
5 O come, thou Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen
6 O come, thou Day - spring from on high, and cheer us
7 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind in one the
8 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som

1 cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
5 wide our heaven - ly home; make safe the way that leads on
6 by thy draw - ing nigh; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of
7 hearts of all man - kind; bid thou our sad di - vi - sions
8 cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile

1 here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
5 high, and close the path to mis - er - y.
6 night, and death's dark shad - ow put to flight. Re - joice! Re - joice!
7 cease, and be thy - self our King of Peace.
8 here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.

Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Dismissal

BCP 366

Presider
People

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Improvisation on *Veni, veni, Emmanuel*

For Friends, Visitors and Newcomers

Welcome to Trinity Episcopal Church in Cranford, New Jersey. Thank you for joining us in worship. The bulletin is designed to make you feel at home and includes everything you need for the service (liturgy, hymns, rubrics, etc.). Please connect with us; introduce yourself to the ushers so they can make you feel more comfortable.

Father Andy is in the narthex (entrance) at the end of the service; it is an opportunity to connect on a more personal level. All are invited to Fellowship Hour in Sherlock Hall immediately after the service. An email blast is sent every Thursday by 2 PM with hyperlinks to sign-up sheets, methods to contribute to the parish or other charitable organizations, ways to contact individuals or receive information on events, etc. Please contact the parish office to receive it or alternative methods of communication.

What you need to know today...

Christmas Pageant Rehearsals will be held during the 10 AM service, followed by a dress rehearsal at 11:30 AM in the Church. No Children's Choir rehearsal due to the pageant dress rehearsal.

Fellowship Hour In Sherlock Hall, immediately after this service; coffee, tea and snacks are provided.

Vestry Meeting Today at 11:30 AM in Witherington Hall, please pray for the leadership of our parish:

Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel in Trinity's Vestry for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach them in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide them to perceive what is right, and grant them both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Outdoor Nativity Scene Volunteers are needed to help erect the outdoor nativity scene after the 10 AM service today. Please report to John Beier in the Witherington Chapel at 11:30 AM for directions.

150th Anniversary Account Thank you so much to everyone who gave so generously to our 150th Anniversary Societies over the last several years. The account will be closed out at the end of this year. The plaque with the names of all who contributed will be displayed in Witherington Hall early in the new year. If you would like to submit an outstanding 150th pledge please contact Carol Beier (cbeier@gordonherlands.com).

Cranford HS Madrigal Choir Holiday CD Today through Christmas Eve, the session recorded at Trinity in December 2024 will be on sale. See Anthony Rafaniello after the 8 AM or 10 AM services to purchase. Each CD is \$25; cash, check made out to "Cranford High School" or Venmo (@CranfordChoir). Proceeds support the Cranford HS Choir Program.

What you need to know this week...

Cranford High School Madrigal Choir Concert Tuesday, December 23 at 5 PM in the church. The group will be singing some of their holiday favorites. Admission is free; their holiday CDs will be available for purchase during the performance. All are welcome.

Parish Office is closed Wednesday, December 24 to Monday, January 5, 2026. Parish Administrator Marion Nechuta is normally in Tuesday (12 noon-2:30 PM), Wednesday (1 PM-3:30 PM) and Thursday (12 noon-2:30 PM). Father Andy's sabbath day is Friday.

Rector on Vacation Sunday, December 28 through Thursday, January 1. In the event of a pastoral emergency, contact Marion Nechuta at the Parish Office.

The Daily Offices Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer are offered online from Monday to Friday at 8:30 AM and 5 PM. However, there are no Daily Offices on the evening of December 24 and throughout the day on December 25 due to Christmas Services.

The Handbell Choir is on Christmas break, rehearsals begin again on Wednesday, January 7.

The Trinity Adult Choir will rehearse at 9:30 PM in Witherington Hall ahead of the 10:30 PM Lessons and Carols Service,

Compline Usually on Thursdays at 8 PM online; however, not this Thursday due to the Christmas holiday.

What you need to know in the future...

St. John's Sandwich Sunday Today; people are needed to make sandwiches after the services and deliver them to St. John's in Elizabeth. Sandwich donation items needed are listed in this week's email blast. To help, please contact Marion Nechuta (marionnechuta@yahoo.com) or Helen Shteynberg (hshteynberg@gmail.com).

Martin Luther King Jr. Thursday, January 15 at 7 PM at St. Mark's AME Church, Cranford.

Annual Parish Meeting Sunday, January 25, 2026 following one service at 10 AM. Reports are due by Sunday, January 4.

2026 Annual Meeting

Notice is hereby given that according to the State Law governing the Episcopal Church, and the Constitution of the Parish, the Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2026, following the 10 AM service (there is only one service that day) in Sherlock Hall. Election of new vestry members, convention and convocation delegates, and review of 2025 Annual Report are presented.

Deadline for committee reports is Sunday, January 4, 2025; refer to last year's Annual Report (available by request).

Spiritual Reflection: *Attende!*

The life and writing of Simone Weil is rich and intense. She often defined her spiritual ideal in terms of one particular French word which is difficult to translate because it means two things: *attente*, meaning both 'waiting' and 'attention'. This notion of attention and waiting is worth contemplating; especially in the midst of this season of Advent – with its theme of expectant waiting. It's the kind of waiting experienced by a birdwatcher: you have to be very still, relaxed and focused all at the same time. At every moment you're expecting something, but you're not so screwing up your energies that you are too tensely concentrated to notice when it happens.

Weil's best-known book has the title *Attente de Dieu* (Waiting on God): the essence of prayer begins in attention, waiting attention; and this involves a kind of selflessness. You put your thoughts and anxieties on the back burner, you open yourself to what's there and you allow your mind to be shaped by what's in front of you.

That is her most central and important idea, and what is most striking about her development of it is that it helps her connect experiences that we all share in some way with the experience of contemplating God. Instead of thinking, 'I must be very concentrated and pure and saintly before I can contemplate God,' we can think, 'I'm actually already "contemplating" in some way when I'm learning how to speak Spanish, how to play an instrument, even how to shoot a bow.

Simone Weil was born in 1909 and died, still a young woman, in 1943 at Ashford in Kent. She had fled from France when the Nazis took over, and spent her last months as a refugee in Britain. Her death was partly the result of her decision that she would eat no more food than was available to the poorest of her fellow citizens in France; it was a decision deeply typical of her selflessness. When on retreat at the great Benedictine abbey at Solesmes, she describes how one evening she was reciting George Herbert's poem 'Love Bade Me Welcome'. As she recited the words of the poem by heart, she recalls how, 'Christ himself came down and took possession of me.' Let us be *attente* for Christ. Amen.

Williams, Rowan. Luminaries: Twenty Lives that Illuminate the Christian Way. Kindle Edition.

Advent, Christmas and Epiphany Worship Schedule

Sunday, December 21	Fourth Sunday of Advent	8 AM, Rite I and 10 AM, Rite II
Wednesday, December 24	Christmas Pageant	4:30 PM Rite II Eucharist with the blessing of the creche
Wednesday, December 24	Lessons & Carols	10:30 PM Traditional Anglican feast of music and scripture
Thursday, December 25	Christmas Day	9 AM One single worship service, Rite I
Sunday, December 28	First Sunday after Christmas	9 AM One single worship service, Rite II
Sunday, January 4	Epiphany (observed)	8 AM Rite I Eucharist and 10 AM Rite II Eucharist
Sunday, January 11	Baptism of our Lord	8 AM Rite I Eucharist and 10 AM Rite II Eucharist

Lectionary & Liturgy

On this final Sunday of preparation for the celebration of Christ's birth, the central figures are the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. The Gospel reading is Matthew's account of Jesus' conception by the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin. It is this Incarnation—becoming flesh—of God the Son that unites things earthly with things heavenly. In the quiet obedience of Joseph and Mary, we find the model for Christian living that enables us to be extensions of Christ's Incarnation.

In today's reading from Isaiah, the prophet foretells the birth of a child in a passage that the New Testament writers, especially Matthew, considered to be fulfilled in Jesus' birth from Mary. Jesus' descent from David, his birth, his death and resurrection, are Paul's theme in the passage from Romans. That life, death, and resurrection are the source of our new life in Christ, and bring us the grace and power to live in faith and obedience.

The liturgy centers on the fact that God comes to us in and through the material world. He came in the flesh of a human mother and lived within a human family. He comes to us now in bread and wine. He comes to the world in our flesh as we live in faithful obedience to him. The pattern for that obedience is the Holy Family of Nazareth for whom we give thanks today.

From The Rite Light: Reflections on the Sunday Readings and Seasons of the Church Year. © 2007 by Michael W. Merriman. Church Publishing Inc. NY

- † **Cover Art** – “The Dream of Saint Joseph” by Domingo Martinez (1688–1749), a painter of religious works, portraits and frescoes. Considered the leading exponent of Sevillian painting in the first half of the 18th century. His life and work are bound to his city of birth, turning down an opportunity to move to the court in Madrid. His prolific career came to an end with the works he was making for the San Luis de los Franceses church when he died.
- † **Handbell Prelude** – Cathy Moglebust has been at St. Olaf Lutheran, Austin MN since 1987; she has nearly 500 pieces in print and been described as “incredibly emotional, delightfully fresh, and uncommonly creative for the unique medium of handbells.” –[© 2011 Choristers Guild]
- † **Gathering Chant** – Words & Music: James J. Chepponis. “Dedicated to Michael McGrath. Verses are based on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception (December 8) but can also be used as general Advent verses.” –[©1995 GIA Publications]
- † **Service Music** – Dr. David Hurd (b. 1950), composer, concert organist, choral director and educator; professor at General Theological Seminary for 28 years. Presently Director of Music at Church of Saint Mary the Virgin in Times Square, NYC. –[© 1981 GIA Publications]

- † **Collect** – This is included in the Gregorian sacramentary under “Other Prayers for Advent” in the *Missale Gallicanum vetus* for use in the season when the first advent is recalled and the second anticipated, reminding us of our Lord’s entry into Jerusalem and is especially in accord with the Annunciation theme of the lections for the day. –[*Notes on the American Prayer Book* by Marion Hatchett]
- † **Proclaiming Hymn** – – Words: Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965), English writer for children whose magical but unsentimental tales, which often mock the behavior of adults, earned her a revered place in many British nurseries. “Nellie” refused another prize, Dame of the British Empire, explaining that she “did not wish to become different from the milkman.” She later cared for her dying mother for the twelve years of a long and difficult illness. –[© David Higham Assoc. Ltd.] Music: 17th cent. French melody from the Franche-Comté region of France.
- † **Gospel** – The Christian gospel, for Augustine, wasn’t just the answer to an intellectual question (though it was that); it was like a shelter in a storm, a port for a wayward soul, nourishment for a prodigal hungering, whose own heart had become, he said, “a famished land.” It was, he said, like someone had finally shown him his home country, even though he had never been there.
- † **Prayers of the People** – Adapted from “Leading Intercessions: Prayers for Sundays, Holy Days and Festivals and for Special Services Years A, B & C” by Raymond Chapman. Prayers reflect the Bible readings of the day, creating a more integrated act of worship. The prayer leader represents before God all those who are present so that at the close of the prayer all can say with integrity the ancient word of assent: *Amen*. It is a Hebrew word that has come down untranslated through Greek and Latin into English. Virtually every other language Christians speak has similarly made room for this untranslated term. Often said to mean “so be it.”
- † **Maranatha** – An Aramaic phrase meaning “Our Lord, come!” or “Our Lord has come”. It is a Christian expression of hope and anticipation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The term appears in the New Testament as a closing to St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, and it is often used as a prayer and a rallying cry by early Christians.
- † **Offertory Anthem** – “Ubi Caritas” by Ola Gjeilo (Norwegian; born May 5, 1978) is a Norwegian composer and pianist in the United States. He writes choral music, and has written for piano and wind symphony. He currently resides in Manhattan, working as a freelance composer. He is currently composer-in-residence with DCINY and Albany Pro Musica.
- † **Offertory Hymn** – Words: Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2016); free paraphrase of the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55), one of his first hymn texts and his best known. It was first published in the *Anglican Hymn Book* (1965). “I did not think of myself as having in any way the gifts of a hymn-writer when in May 1961 I jotted down a set of verses, beginning “Tell out, my soul.” I was reading the New English Bible New Testament, where that line appears exactly as I have put it; I saw in it the first line, and speedily wrote the rest. Music: Walter Greatorex (1877-1949); the title refers to one of the schoolhouses at Gresham’s School, Holt, Norfolk, where he was director of music from 1911-1936.
- † **First Communion Hymn** – Words: Latin, 9th cent.; ver. *Hymnal 1940*. It was formerly ascribed to Saint Ambrose, but there is no contemporaneous evidence to support the attribution. The hymn was rewritten by Pope Urban VIII in 1632, changing it so extensively that only the second line of the original hymn remained unchanged. Music: plainsong, Mode 4.
- † **Second Communion Hymn** – Words: Martin Luther (1483-1546) after Ambrose of Milan (340-397). Music: melody from *Erfurt Enchiridia*, 1524; the tune dates from a 12th or 13th-century Einsiedeln manuscript, presumably by Johann Walther.
- † **Communion Meditation** – Words & Music: Jacques Berthier, Taizé Community –[©1986, 1991, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc.]
- † **Sending Hymn** – Words: Latin, ca. 9th cent.; ver. *Hymnal 1940*. Music: plainsong, Mode 1, Processionale, 15th cent. This hymn has its origins in the monastic life of the 8th or 9th century. The original Latin text, composed as early as the 12th century, is a metrical paraphrase of the *O Antiphons*, a series of plainchant antiphons attached to the *Magnificat* over the final days before Christmas. It is first documented in Germany in the 7th edition of *Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum* (1710). This hymnal was a major force in the history of German church music, first assembled by a Jesuit hymnographer. It was combined with its most famous tune, often itself called *Veni Emmanuel*, in the English-language *Hymnal Noted* in 1851, with a translation by John Mason Neale –[© Church Pension Fund]
- † **Book of Common Prayer** – “The United States BCP is not and never has been under copyright. So all are basically free to copy at will and it is absolutely completely permissible to post the book on Wikisource and other sites. Since there is no copyright, content control is done through the certificate at the beginning of the book.”

Anglican Communion's Secretary General offers Christmas message

[Anglican Communion News Service] The Rt. Rev. Anthony Poggo, secretary general, has issued the following Christmas message.

My dear brothers and sisters, on behalf of everyone at the Anglican Communion Office, I send you warm greetings in Christ.

It is a joy to serve the Anglican Communion. This year, I've had the privilege of visiting several of your communities around the globe. In many places, the church is thriving. I am deeply encouraged by your ministry, hospitality and faithful witness. You are fulfilling the purpose for which Jesus was born: to bring the good news of salvation to the world.

At this time, many of you are serving in places of conflict or challenge. I think especially of our Christian family in places like South Sudan, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Israel and the Gaza strip, among others. I think of those in Hong Kong affected by fires, or those in Sri Lanka impacted by flooding. As you seek to support your communities, be assured of our ongoing prayers and solidarity.

This year, Christians marked the 1700th anniversary of the first Council of Nicaea, the council that gave us the Nicene Creed. That creed affirms the central beliefs we share across so many church traditions. It connects us — across cultures, centuries and continents — reminding us that Christ calls his church to be one.

In recent days, we've seen this call to unity powerfully embodied by Pope Leo XIV from the Catholic Church and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I from the Orthodox Church. During an ecumenical pilgrimage in Turkey, they signed a joint declaration, reaffirming a commitment to work toward the unity of their churches. In doing so, they modelled the same spirit of reconciliation that guided the church fathers at Nicaea 17 centuries ago. They also made a strong appeal for peace, urging global leaders to end the tragedy of war.

At Christmas, their declaration challenges us to remember that Christian unity must always bear fruit in our witness to the world. The book of Isaiah tells us, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

As we prepare for Christmas and celebrate the coming of the Prince of Peace, may we continue to walk closer together as Christians. May we share the hope of Christ with a hurting world. And may we work tirelessly for the peace that only he can bring. Amen.

Note: Anthony Poggo (born 1964) is a South Sudanese Anglican bishop. Since 2022, he has been the secretary general of the Anglican Consultative Council and head of the Anglican Communion Office. During his childhood, Poggo's father, an Anglican priest, took his children to Uganda to flee the first Sudanese Civil War. They returned in 1973. Poggo was educated at the University of Juba and Oxford Brookes University. He was ordained a deacon in 1995 and a priest in 1996. He then joined Across, a Christian mission agency working in Sudan, eventually becoming its executive director. In 2007 he was elected bishop of the South Sudanese diocese of Kajo-Keji, a position he held until 2016 when he moved to Lambeth Palace to support Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby as his adviser on Anglican Communion affairs. In 2022, he succeeded Josiah Idowu-Fearon as secretary-general of the Anglican Communion.^[3]

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