

# The Church of the Holy Trinity

Rittenhouse Square

## Christmas Eve

4:00 PM

Family Service  
& Blessing of the Crèche



December 24, 2024

# Welcome to The Church of the Holy Trinity

We're glad that you're with us!  
We mean it when we say...ALL are WELCOME!  
Just as you are – you are welcome!

For those of you with children (or who are children at heart) – we want you to know how much we love the joyful noises we hear tonight and the excitement that comes during Christmas services! This is a day that should be filled with all of our excitement! Please don't worry about hushing noises or questions or making sure everyone is sitting up straight and listening perfectly! There is no such thing as "too much noise" at a service like this. You don't need to worry if they don't remember everything that happened. They are listening and watching and it is all sinking in. They will probably surprise you later with what they learned.

Christmas is a time to remember all the gifts we have been given throughout our lives, but most importantly the gift of love given to us by God in Jesus! **Tonight you will be invited to help decorate the church for Christmas** – with your prayers, your songs, and your presence. Our children and youth will narrate the story of the first Christmas. Our Choristers will share their gift of singing with you. Families will bring the pieces of the crèche forward to create the nativity scene while we are singing. Watch as the scene comes to life!

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## Participants:

**Narrators:** Emily Bierwirth, Hunter Bullen, Quinn Gardner, Willa Ritter, Rosie Ritter, David Sumner, Connor Gardner

**Creche Bearers:** Rosalind & David Sumner & Family, Jackson & Cole Stromberg, Freddy Ritter & Family, Ian Hilbert & Family, Summer, Hunter & Jay Bullen

### **Officiants:**

The Rev. Rachel Wenner Gardner, *Rector*;  
Robbin McCarthy, *Deacon-in-Training*

### **Music:**

Ben Leiby, *Interim Organist & Choirmaster*

### **Acolytes:**

The Lipscomb Family



**Prelude**

*Christmas Time is Here*  
*Jason Sagle, piano*

Vince Guaraldi

**Welcome**

The Rev. Rachel Wenner Gardner, Rector

Please rise in body or in spirit

## The Christmas Bidding Prayer

*Officiant* Dear People of God: In this Christmas Season, let it be our duty and delight to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger. Let us hear and heed the story of God's loving purpose, and let us make this place glad with our carols of praise.

## The Entrance Carol:

*Adeste Fidelis*

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - an - phant, O  
2 God from God, Light from Light e - ter - nal,  
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,

1 come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
2 lo! he ab - hors not the Vir - gin's womb;  
3 sing, all ye ci - ti - zens of heaven a - bove;

1 come, and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;  
2 on - ly - be - got - ten Son of the Fa - ther;  
3 glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est;

*Refrain*

O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a -

dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord.

*Officiant* Behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will come to all the people. For to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

*People* **Glory to God for ever and ever! And peace to God's people on earth.**

*Officiant* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Officiant* Let us pray.

Good and gracious God, on this holy night you have given us your Son, the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes; the Savior of all, lying in a manger. On this holy night, draw us into the mystery of your love. Join our voices with heaven's angels, that we may sing your glory on high. Give us a place among the shepherds, that we may find the one for whom we have waited: Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in the splendor of eternal light, one God forever and ever. **Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

## **The Christmas Story**

*Narrator* This night is like no other night. It is a time to dream and sing our way to Bethlehem. The children will show us how to go.

The little town we seek sits in the hill country about ten miles south of Jerusalem. For thousands of years the houses have gathered there on the hill top like a family breaking bread. Bethlehem means House of Bread. In the center of the village is a small inn. On this night it is overflowing with people seeking sleep and a place to eat. Behind the inn is a dark stable. A gray donkey chews his barley and broken straw while a weary cow leans and rests after a day's plowing in the valley. A sheep nearby is nearly asleep. All is still in the little town.

*The Ashbaugh/Sumner Family brings forward the donkey, sheep and cow.*

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
 2 For Christ is born of Ma - ry; and gath - ered all a - bove,  
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!  
 \*4 Where child - ren pure and hap - py pray to the bless - ed Child,  
 5 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

1 A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
 2 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.  
 3 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven.  
 4 where mis - er - y cries out to thee, Son of the mo - ther mild;  
 5 cast out our sin and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.

1 yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;  
 2 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!  
 3 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,  
 4 where char - i - ty stands watch - ing and faith holds wide the door,  
 5 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

1 the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
 2 and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.  
 3 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.  
 4 the dark night wakes, the glo - ry breaks, and Christ - mas comes once more.  
 5 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

*Narrator* As night gathers, the last two travelers come slowly up the road. Look, there is a young woman about to be a mother. She is walking with her husband.

They are Joseph and Mary from Nazareth! They have walked for six days to come to this city where King David was born, so long ago. They have come, like so many others, because the Roman emperor wants to count each one, so he can take their money as tax. But it is late, and Mary is so tired. Where will they sleep? There is no room in the inn. They decided to sleep with the animals.

*The Stromberg Family brings forward Mary & Joseph*

Carol

Irby

1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's ci - ty stood a  
 6 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the

1 low - ly cat - tle shed, where a mo - ther laid her  
 6 ox - en stand - ing round, we shall see him; but in

1 ba - by in a man - ger for his bed: Ma - ry  
 6 hea - ven, where his saints his throne sur - round: Christ, re -

1 was that mo - ther mild, — Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child. —  
 6 vealed to faith - ful eye, — set at God's right hand on high. —

*Narrator* Stars brighten slowly in the sky. All creation hold its breath. Suddenly from the stable comes the cry of a newborn child! Mary gently wraps the baby in a blanket and lays him in the feedbox that his father has filled with straw.

The Ritter Family brings forward Baby Jesus.

Carol

Cradle Song



1 A - way in a man-ger, no crib for his bed,  
2 The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes,  
\*3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask thee to stay

the lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head.  
but lit - tle Lord Je - sus no cry - ing he makes.  
close by me for ev - er, and love me I pray.

The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
I love thee, Lord Je - sus! Look down from the sky,  
Bless all the dear chil - dren in thy ten - der care,

the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.  
and stay by my side un - til morn - ing is night.  
and fit us for hea - ven to live with thee there.

*Narrator* In the hills outside Bethlehem, shepherds watch their shadowy sheep. All at once the dark is lost in light, and the midst of the light is something even brighter: the Faces of angels.

The fearful shepherds then hear music in the sky, and a voice says clearly, “Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by all people. Today in the City of David a Savior is born! He is Christ, the lord.” Then more angels appear, a whole heavenly host of them, praising God and singing:

*All* “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will to everyone, everywhere.”



Narrator

The Shepherds run with Joy across the fields to Bethlehem to the barn behind the inn. There they find the Holy Family and creep forward overwhelmed with mystery, to find Jesus in the center of all that love.

*The Hilbert/Makowsky Family bring forward the Shepherds and Angel.*

Carol

Gloria

1 An - gels we have heard on high, sing - ing sweet - ly through the night,  
 2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why these songs of hap - py cheer?  
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their brave de - light.  
 What great bright - ness did you see? What glad tid - ings did you hear?  
 come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.

*Refrain*

Glo - - - - - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - - - - -

- - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.



*Narrator* Three camels plod up the road to Bethlehem. They come from the East, far beyond the Arabian Desert, perhaps from as far as the Caspian Sea. The camels carry three kings, the Wise Ones, the Magi. They are following the wild star, the destiny they had never seen before, and they are following it where it goes to find the king its shining shows them.

*The Pagana/Bullen Family brings forward the three kings and places them in the aisle.*

**Carol**

*Three Kings of Orient*



1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are, bear - ing  
 2 Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I  
 3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I: in - cense  
 4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a  
 5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and



1 gifts we tra - verse a - far, field and foun - tain,  
 2 bring to crown him a - gain, King for ev - er,  
 3 owns a De - i - ty nigh; prayer and prais - ing,  
 4 life of gath - er - ing gloom; sor - rowing, sigh - ing,  
 5 God and Sac - ri - fice; heaven sings al - le -



1 moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
 2 ceas - ing nev - er o - ver us all to reign.  
 3 glad - ly rais - ing, wor - ship him, God Most High.  
 4 bleed - ing, dy - ing, sealed in the stone - cold tomb.  
 5 lu - ia: al - le - lu - ia the earth re - plies.

*Refrain*

O star of won - der, star of night,

star with roy - al beau - ty bright; west - ward lead - ing,

still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light!

Narrator

They will not reach the stable for another 12 days until the Feast of Epiphany. When they do, their journey will end with a new kind of king. Their restlessness will rest at last. They will fall to their knees and give him bright gold, sweet-smelling frankincense and bitter myrrh, brought so far with so much love. So now we all come, following the star, to find God with us. We come, as people have come all through the ages, to bring our own gifts to this Child, God's gift to us. The Crèche is now set, the story now told. We invite you to honor this moment as we sing Silent Night together.

Carol

Stille Nacht

Si - lent night, ho - ly night, all is calm,  
 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, shep - herds quake  
 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God,

all is bright round yon vir - gin mo - ther and child.  
 at the sight, glo - ries stream from hea - ven a - far,  
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face,

Ho - ly in - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in hea - ven - ly  
 heaven - ly hosts—sing al - le - lu - ia; Christ, the Sa - vior, is  
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy

peace. Sleep in hea - ven - ly peace.  
 born! Christ, the Sa - vior, is born!  
 birth. Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

Carol

Antioch

During the hymn we will be passing the offering plates. If you prefer to give online, you can text CHT DONATE to 73256 or scan the QR Code to the right. Your generous gifts go to support our Open Hearts Café, the magnificent Music Programs by our Choir, our amazing staff and this beautiful building.



1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth re -  
 2 Joy to the world! the Sa - vior reigns; let us our  
 \*3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in -  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the

ceive her King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room, and  
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, re -  
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow far  
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous - ness, and

heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture  
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

*Please rise in body or in spirit*

The Blessing of the Crèche

*Officiant* O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament, that animals should see the new-born Lord, lying in a manger! Blessed is Mary who will give birth to Christ the Lord. Alleluia! The Word was made flesh

*People* And dwelt among us.

*Officiant* Let us pray.

Almighty God, who in the Incarnation of your Son has revealed to us the holiness of creation, be pleased to bless and hallow this image of his sacred birth, so that those who gaze upon it may behold this mystery, whereby humanity shares in your very nature; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## The Blessing

*Officiant* May Christ fill you with joy and peace this Christmas season; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Carol

*Hark the Herald*

1 Hark! the her-ald an - gels sing glo - ry to the new - born King!  
2 Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored; Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord;  
3 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!  
late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb.  
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;  
Veiled in flesh the God - head see; hail the in - car - nate De - i - ty.  
Risen with heal - ing in his wings, light and life to all he brings,

The musical score consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The music is in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are printed below the vocal line of each system.

with the an-gel - ic host pro - claim Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!  
 Pleased as man with us to dwell; Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!  
 hail, the Sun of Right - eous - ness! hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!

*Refrain*

Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing glo - ry to the new - born King!

**Dismissal**

*Officiant* Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

*People* Thanks be to God.

**Postlude**

*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

J. S. Bach

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**What's Happening This Week:**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
Tuesday, December 24	8:00 pm	Lessons & Carols	Church
Wednesday, December 25	10:00	Christmas Day Service	Church
Thursday, December 26	<b>Church &amp; Offices Closed - No Morning Prayer</b>		
Friday, December 27	<b>Church &amp; Offices Closed - No Morning Prayer</b>		
Sunday, December 29	11:00 am	Holy Eucharist - <i>The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas</i>	Church
	12:00 pm	Refreshments	Church
	4:00 pm	Open Hearts Cafe	Centennial Room
Monday, December 30	10:00-3:00	Church Open	
Tuesday, December 31	10:00-3:00	Church Open	
	3:00 pm	Open Hearts Café	Centennial Room
January 1-2	<b>Church and Offices Closed</b>		

**SAVE THE DATE: Sunday January 5, 2025 after church Take Down Decorations**

# The Christmas flowers in the Church are offered to the glory of God...

*by Ashley and Ray Del Bianco*

In Memory of Bob & Judy Reiff

*by Alyssa & Farzad Force*

In Memory of Jeannetta Drysdale Lee Burpee & W. Atlee Burpee, Jr.

*by Murray Richards Richey*

In Memory of Anne Mitchell

*by Murray Richards Richey*

Thanksgiving for Richard, Loren & Alexander Kagen

In Memory of Nancy & Charlie Simpson

*by Shreve Simson*

In Memory of Mary Anne Foreman & James B. Griffith

*by Sally Griffith*

In memory of our loved ones & In honor of our friends

*by Peg Mertz*

In Loving Memory of Adam & Edna Cunningham

Adam Cunningham, Jr.

*by Reaucheane Williams*

In Memory of Joan Bensinger

In Memory of Mitzi Cooper

In Memory of Bill Kelly

*by Don McKenzie*

In Honor of our Children

*by The Revs. John and Rachel Gardner*

# WELCOME

WE ARE GLAD THAT YOU ARE HERE!

## OUR VIVID VISION

*This was created in 2022 in collaboration with the Rectors, Wardens & Vestry and is intended to describe where we will be in 3 years.*

The church is bursting with life. Outside the building, people are talking, resting, and enjoying the weather. Inside, people are coming and going – staff and volunteers connecting and welcoming. Families, students, working professionals, retirees and neighbors mingle with each other, finding resources they need: safety and support, education, and creative outlets. Visitors and members alike find a place to make a difference and share their gifts with each other. The smell of delicious food wafts through the air as the chefs prepare the community meal for the day. Visitors from all over the world are marveling at the beautiful interior of the sanctuary. Worshipers are laughing, singing, praising, and just enjoying being together. The delicate sounds of violin mingle with the robust organ and the echoes of voices. We are more than just a place on the Square. We are an integral part of the neighborhood.

## CORE VALUES

### INCLUSION/WELCOME

We believe that no one should feel left out or alone. We embrace our differences and respect each person within our community. This allows everyone to bring their unique and authentic gifts to further the mission of the church.

### INNOVATION

We are not afraid of trying new things or changing when necessary. If things do not work out, we are open to re-evaluate, learn from our mistakes, and try again.

### COLLABORATION

We listen to and support one another, working and evolving together. We build upon each other's strengths and lift up each other's gifts.

### COMMUNITY MINDEDNESS

Church is not an individual endeavor, but a community experience. We believe that we cannot each succeed or be whole, unless everyone finds success and wholeness.

## CULTURE

### JOYFUL

We are hopeful, optimistic, and have fun together. Being part of this community gives us joy, and our joy spreads to others and makes us want to share joy with them.

### FEARLESS

We are innovative, purposeful and adaptable. We believe that with God all things are possible and that with prayer and connection to God we will always have enough. We are not afraid of trying new things or of failing. We learn from our mistakes. We reach out to others drawing them in, not waiting for them to find us.

### EMBRACING

We love others, because God loves us. This means that we are accepting, welcoming, open, genuine, and empathetic. We speak the truth in love.

### ENGAGED

Our connection to this organization is full of energy. We give without expectation of return. We continuously learn about the community and our neighbors and adapt our connections as needed. We all contribute our time, money and skills to make our community better.



## **Staff of The Church of the Holy Trinity**

The Rev. Rachel Wenner Gardner, *Rector*

The Rev. John Gardner, *Rector*

Benjamin Leiby, *Interim Organist-Choirmaster*

Robyn Schnieders, *Director of Operations & Administration*

Inaara Shiraz, *Director of Communications*

Karen Majer, *Rentals & House Manager*

Demetrius Swinson, *Custodian & Superman*

Lawrence Miller, Therese Tiger, Molly Hebert-Wilson, *Reception*

Nabayah Parker, *Child Care Worker*

Boyden Gardner, *Streaming Services*

Dr. Stephen Framil, *Musician-in-Residence*

Dr. John French, *Organist-Choirmaster emeritus*

## **The Choir of Holy Trinity**

Gail Caruso, Patricia Conrad, Stephanie DeMane, Will Dowling, Franny Geller, Andrew Gutknecht, Thomas Kneeland, John Miles, Mike O'Bryan, Aimee Pilgermayer, Eddie Rubeiz, Julianna Smith, and Amanda Staub

## **Church of the Holy Trinity, Vestry**

Brian Conroy, Phillip Duffy, Alyssa Force, Monica Heuer, Margaret Hughes, Simson Hui, Susan Leidy, Martha Lipscomb, Greg Maughan, James Otwell, Ali Shott, & Emily Stromberg



**THE CHURCH OF  
THE HOLY TRINITY**  
RITTENHOUSE SQUARE