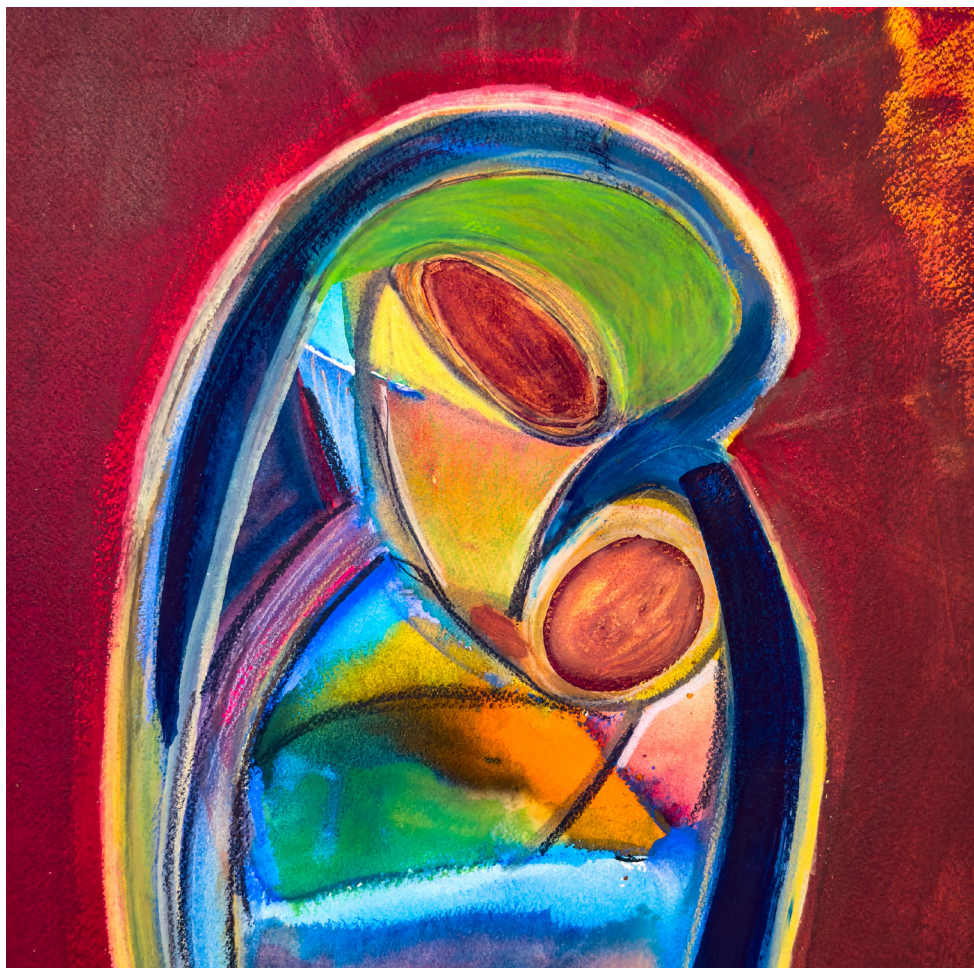




PALMER MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

— HOUSTON, TEXAS —



CHRISTMAS EVE
DECEMBER 24, 2024
3:00 PM | HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

6221 MAIN STREET | HOUSTON, TEXAS 77030 | 713.529.6196

PALMERCHURCH.ORG

Welcome to Palmer, and Merry Christmas!

We are a community of Christians that worships in the Episcopal tradition, which has its roots in the practices of the ancient Church. We are a congregation that values not only eternal answers but also important questions. You are part of the great “We” that begins the Nicene Creed in this service, and we are grateful for your presence and your prayers. You are surrounded by the love of Jesus on this holy night.

Christmas, of course, is not merely one night, it is a season in the life of the Church. It’s also a gift — the gift of God’s presence in the world and in our lives — that gives meaning to every day of every year. That gift strengthens us to look for moments of grace, to offer gestures of forgiveness, and to serve those suffering in the shadows of our neighborhoods and cities.



If you’re curious about our congregation and want to know more about it, please speak with someone at the Welcome Tent in front of the church and fill out a Welcome Card, which you can find in the pew racks, at the Welcome Tent, or by using this QR code.

Palmer’s services of worship, including the beautiful music you will enjoy this evening, and our ministries such as Bible studies, pastoral care, and outreach throughout the year are made possible because of the financial generosity of Palmer’s members and friends. I invite you, therefore, to keep that in mind when you make your Christmas offering, either placing your cash or check in the offering plates that will be passed in the pews in the middle of this service or making a financial contribution online at palmerchurch.org/give or using this QR code.



Your generosity helps us open as wide as possible the doors of this parish church, where people can find love and acceptance, beauty and inspiration, and a spirit that respects the dignity of everyone created in God’s image. *That includes you, whether you are feeling joyous, grieving a loss, or experiencing loneliness. We have been expecting you, and we are grateful that you are here with us. Christ was born for this — for us — for you.*

— The Rev’d Neil Alan Willard, *Rector of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church*

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

If you are a baptized Christian of any tradition, you are invited to receive communion with us after the Breaking of the Bread. The consecrated bread will be placed in your outstretched hands. Those who require either grape juice or gluten-free bread and wine should let the minister of communion know. When the chalice of consecrated wine comes to you, you may sip from the chalice, or carefully dip part of the consecrated bread into the wine, or decline it. Rest assured that you will have made a full communion if you choose to receive the consecrated bread only, with nothing lacking in your experience of God’s grace on this Christmas Eve.

RECEIVING A BLESSING

If you are not a baptized Christian, or your Christian tradition does not allow you to receive communion with us, we encourage you to come forward at the time of communion to receive a blessing. Simply cross your arms over your chest as someone approaches with the bread, and that person will know to give you a blessing instead of communion. In this way, everyone can participate in this part of the service. So we hope you will.

Cover Art by Roger Hutchison

Prelude: Prelude on "Greensleeves"

Richard Purvis

Introit: *On This Day Earth Shall Ring*

arr. Gustav Holst

Holy Cross Children's Choir

On this day earth shall ring with the song children sing to the Lord, Christ our King,
born on earth to save us; him the Father gave us. Ideo, gloria in excelsis Deo!

His the doom, ours the mirth; when he came down to earth, Bethlehem saw his birth;
ox and ass beside him from the cold would hide him. Ideo, gloria in excelsis Deo!

God's bright star, o'er his head, Wise Men three to him led; kneel they low by his bed, lay their gifts
before him, praise him and adore him. Ideo, gloria in excelsis Deo!

On this day angels sing; with their song earth shall ring, praising Christ, heaven's King, born on
earth to save us; peace and love he gave us. Ideo, gloria in excelsis Deo!

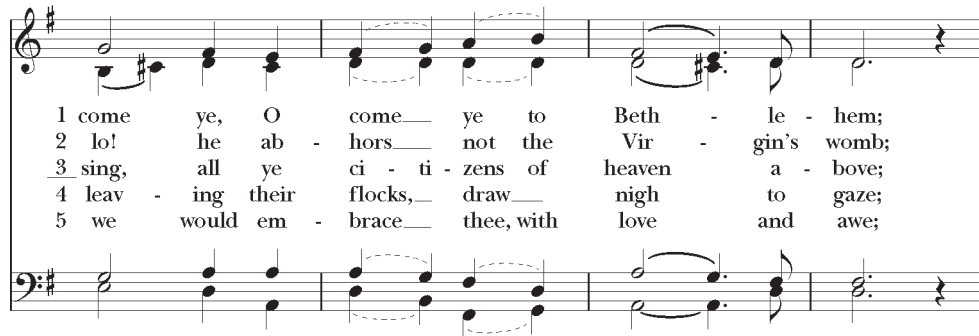
THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn 83 "O come, all ye faithful" (verses 1-3, 6)

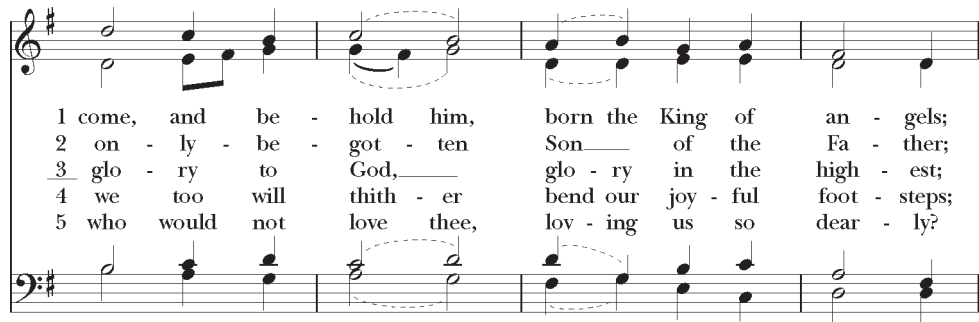
Adeste fideles



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
 2 God from God, Light from Light e - ter - nal,
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 *4 See how the shep - herds, sum - moned to his cra - dle,
 *5 Child, for us sin - ners poor and in the man - ger,



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;
 4 leav - ing their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
 5 we would em - brace thee, with love and awe;



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;
 4 we too will thith - er bend our joy - ful foot - steps;
 5 who would not love thee, lov - ing us so dear - ly?

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.

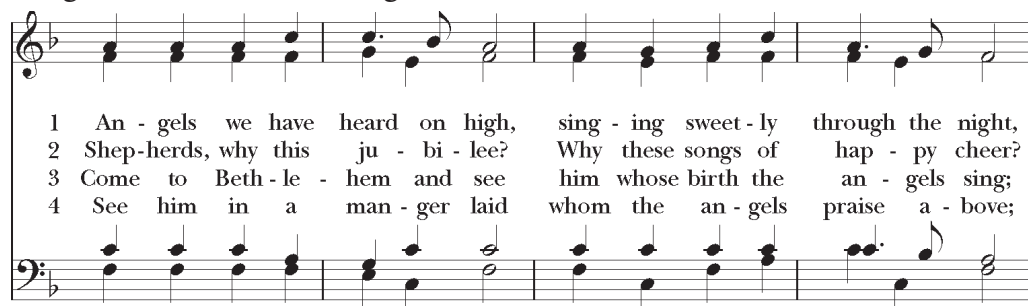
6 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
 born this happy morning;
 Jesus, to thee be glory given;
 Word of the Father,
 now in flesh appearing;

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen.

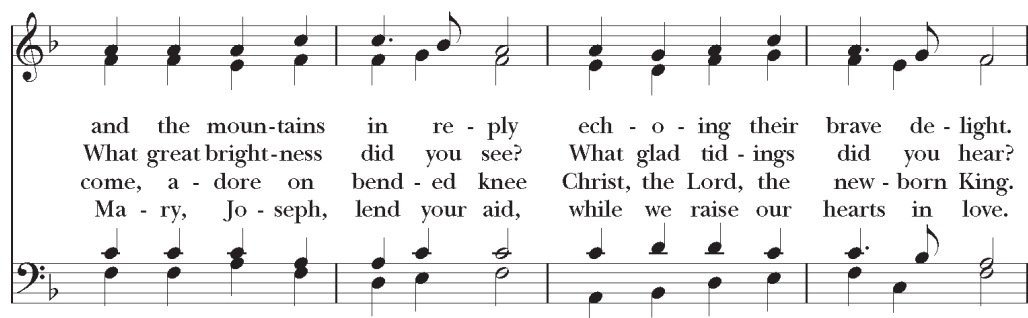
Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn 96 "Angels we have heard on high" (verses 1 & 3)

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;
 4 See him in a man - ger laid whom the an - gels praise a - bove;



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.
 Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love.

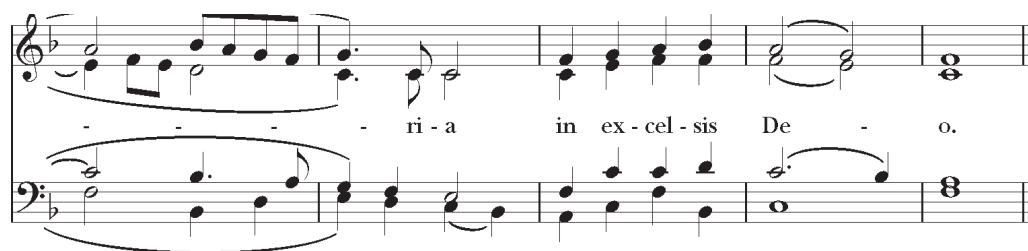
Refrain



Glo - - - - - ri - a



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



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

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you**

Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

The Lessons

First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

Reader A reading from the Book of Isaiah.

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.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Sequence Hymn 87 "Hark! the herald angels sing"

Mendelssohn



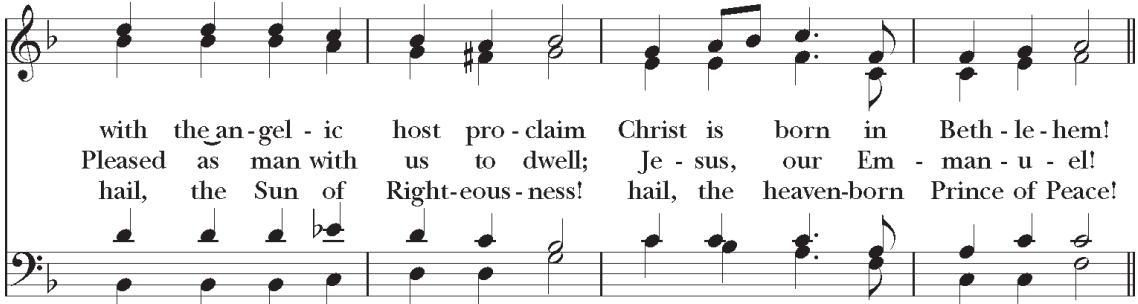
1 Hark! the her-ald an - gels sing glo - ry to the new-born King!
 2 Christ, by high-est heav - en a - dored; Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord;
 3 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



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.

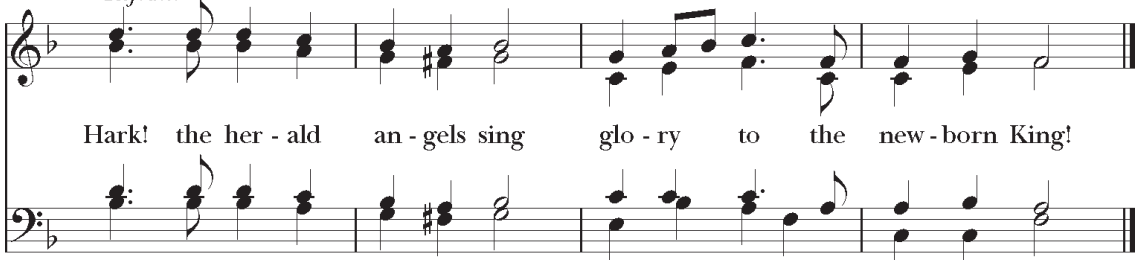


Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, join the tri-umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the in-car-nate De - i - ty.
 Risen with heal-ing in his wings, light and life to all he brings,



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!

Priest The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

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!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Priest The Gospel of the Lord.

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

The Sermon

Roger Hutchison, *Director of Children's and Youth Ministries*

The Nicene Creed

Celebrant We believe in one God,
People 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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
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,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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

Reader Celebrating the birth of Christ, the Morning Star, who brings grace and salvation to all, let us place before God our own needs and those of the whole world.

We pray for the church here and throughout the world, that our worship and praise may give glory to God, and that our lives may bear witness to the peace proclaimed on this holy night by a multitude of angels. Morning Star,

People **Fill our hearts with light divine.**

Reader We pray for the peoples and nations of the earth, that the celebration of the birth of the Prince of Peace may encourage a new birth of righteousness and justice. Morning Star,

People **Fill our hearts with light divine.**

Reader We pray for those bowed down by injustice or despair, that the power of God and the zeal of God's servants may break the rod of oppression and lift the yoke of life's burdens. Morning Star,

People **Fill our hearts with light divine.**

Reader We pray for refugees and aliens, for unhoused people and all parents, that in them we may see the image of Mary and Joseph, and recognize the face of Christ. Morning Star,

People **Fill our hearts with light divine.**

Reader We pray for family and friends near and far, for the hospitalized and homebound, especially patients across the street at the Texas Medical Center, that the good news of Christmas may put to flight the shadows of fear and hail the dawn of light and joy. Morning Star,

People **Fill our hearts with light divine.**

Reader We pray for those gathered in worship here, that by the grace of Christ's coming we may live upright and godly lives, and bear witness to our blessed hope for the Savior's glorious return. Morning Star,

People **Fill our hearts with light divine.**

Reader We pray for those who have died in Christ, that the Savior whose appearing they longed for may gladden them with the vision of heaven's glory. Morning Star,

People **Fill our hearts with light divine.**

The Celebrant adds this concluding Collect

O God, the source of eternal light: Shed forth your unending day upon us who watch for you, that our lips may praise you, our lives may bless you, and our worship in this season of Christmas may give you glory; through Jesus Christ, the Morning Star. **Amen.**

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Then the Ministers and People greet one another in the name of the Lord.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Celebrant begins the Offertory saying

Let us with gladness, on this Christmas Eve, present the offerings and oblations of our life and labor to the Lord.

Those who have brought with them an offering are invited to place it in the offering plate that will be passed in the pews. Others are invited to make their financial contributions online at palmerchurch.org/give or by texting the key word “Palmer” and the dollar amount (for example, Palmer 100) to 73256 or by using this QR code.



Offertory Anthem: *Hodie Christus Natus Est*

Michael Bedford

The angels sang to the shepherds three as they knelt on bended knee, “Christ is born this Holy morn! Hurry to Bethlehem and see!” The shepherds left the hillside bare, traveled over the meadows fair til in awe the child they saw lying in a manger there.

Hodie Christus natus est, gloria in excelsis Deo! Alleluia!
Today Christ is born, glory to God in the highest! Alleluia!
The angels sang...

The Doxology (Hymn 380, verse 3)

Old 100th

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

Celebrant 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 our 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 perfectly human 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 sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and

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

God of power and might, hea - ven and earth are

full, full of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na

in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes

in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na

in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

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.

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 all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your children; 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.

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

People 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.

Agnus Dei S-164

Schubert

Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, bear - er of our sins: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, re - deem - er, re - deem - er of the world:

give us your peace, give us your peace.

The Celebrant says the following Invitation

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Communion Music

Hymn 78 "O little town of Bethlehem" (verses 1-3, 5)

Forest Green

Unison or harmony

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!

Hymn 101 "Away in a manger"

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 nigh.
 and fit us for hea - ven to live with thee there.

Hymn 111 "Silent night"

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 - dian - t 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.

After communion, the Celebrant says

Let us pray.

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 blesses the people, saying

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

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People Thanks be to God.

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
 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

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

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.

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

CHRISTMAS AT PALMER

Christmas Day, December 25

10:00 am
Holy Eucharist

First Sunday after Christmas, December 29

8:00 am
Holy Eucharist

10:00 am
Christmas Lessons & Carols
with Holy Communion

Second Sunday after Christmas, January 5

8:00 am
Holy Eucharist
10:00 am
Choral Eucharist

Questions? Contact info@palmerchurch.org
www.palmerchurch.org

DEDICATION

The high altar candles for Christmas Eve are given
in loving memory of Peter Lewis Chapman
by Martha, Matthew, and Henry Chapman.

MUSICIANS

Dr. Brady Knapp, *Director of Music*
Sunkyung Smith, *Associate Organist*
Courtney Daniell-Knapp, *Director of Children's Music*
Holy Cross Children's Choir