

ADVENT 2020



A Guide Through the Sundays of Advent

November 29 – December 20, 2020

*A book of personal devotions to use alone, as
a family, or with online worship*

St. John's Episcopal Church
Royal Oak, MI

248-546-1255 or 248-721-4325 (*after hours*)

stjohnsroyaloak.org

Welcome to the Advent Seasonal Booklet

Welcome, wherever you are, to the holy Season of **Advent**. **Waiting**, **watching**, and **hoping** are three of the words most commonly associated with the season of Advent. It is striking that the ancient traditions of the church call us to **wait** for the time when we can gather, to **watch** for signs of peace and light, and to dare to **hope** rather than succumb to feelings of despair. In various ways, we are observing the season of Advent here at St. John's. Particularly in our worship, we hope to create spiritual space in which we can all have the chance to wait, watch and hope again for what Christ may be doing among us and in our broken world.

Our prayers and music will evoke the plea we hear in Advent readings and hymns for Christ to come quickly. The minor (but not mournful) keys of much of our music will help to create a sense of anticipation and unresolved tension that calls to mind the Advent hope of the redemption of all things in the fullness of time.

This year, many of us will not be able to gather as a community because of the COVID-19 virus. Even so, we offer this resource so that we may say prayers together, and enter into the Advent season online at stjohnsroyaloak.org, through Zoom (we are happy to walk you through getting set up) in our homes and places of refuge. We are dispersed but not despairing.



Make a "holy place" set apart in your home. Throughout these weeks, we will be attentive to the worshipful-ness of our homes and places where we observe Advent. Set aside a holy place in your home for this season, perhaps a simple side table covered with a cloth, and follow the prompts when you see the home icon to the left. Place a few things to help you enter the presence of God: You might want to find some objects in your home to place on the table that are blue or purple (the traditional colors of Advent). You may want to make or purchase a simple Advent wreath. This can be as simple as placing five candles on a table, fashioning some greenery in a circular shape, or other variations on that theme. Whatever you have is enough. If you have children, encourage them to help you create your holy place.

You will find in this book links to online worship, which you are also encouraged to use. It is our hope that within this Advent season of longing and exile, that these resources will help us find ourselves transformed and at peace as Christ Emmanuel, “God with us”, is born again in our midst.

If you live alone, you may read and pray the words. If you are living with others, share the readings and the prayers. Notes or instructions during the devotions will be found in **red text**. These are not meant to be read aloud but are to help guide you.

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Find supplemental resources for your Advent Devotions here:

Facebook facebook.com/groups/stjohnroyaloak/

Website <https://stjohnsroyaloak.org>

About this Book

--All scripture readings from The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
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--Prayers drawn from *The Book of Common Prayer 1979*, *The Book of Occasional Services 2018*, *Daily Prayers for All Seasons*, *Prayers for an Inclusive Church*, and St. John’s clergy.

--Some prayers and appointed readings have been shortened or changed, with permission of the Bishop, for the purposes of providing a useful devotional for use by individuals and households during physical isolation.

FIRST SUNDAY in ADVENT + November 29



Advent (from the Latin word ‘*adventus*,’ meaning “coming”) is considered to be the beginning of the Church Year, the Christian New Year. We will count these four Sundays before Christmas Eve, and wait, watch, and hope for the “coming” of Christ.

Guided Meditation: *Imagine yourself standing on a threshold. With one foot in the past – in the closing year – ask, ‘where have I/we been? what have I/we learned? what am I/are we ready to leave behind?’ and with one foot in the ‘not yet’ – in the ‘almost’ – let’s ask ourselves ‘what is it that we are really longing for?’*



Light the First Candle of the Advent Wreath: *This custom of candle lighting was derived from the Jewish Sabbath practice and was a regular occurrence in the early Christian house churches. As time went on, the practice was carried over to the larger assemblies outside of homes. The candles are a way of counting down the Sundays that lead to the birth of Jesus. Today, light the first candle (blue or purple) and say a prayer expressing what you are longing for yourself and in our world.*

Advent Acclamation

Presider The days are surely coming, says the Lord
when I will fulfill my promise to my people.

People **Justice and righteousness will fill the land
and all will live in peace. Amen.**

Collect for the First Sunday in Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 64:1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence--
as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil--
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for the Lord.
You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in
your ways.

†The Gospel

Mark 13:24-37

Jesus said, "In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."



At 10:00am on Sunday

Homily

The Rev. Beth Taylor

Join the Sunday Morning Online Worship at 10:00am on November 29 at
Zoom Meeting: <https://bit.ly/StJohnWorship> or call 646-558-8656 Meeting
ID: 945 6437 5922 or watch the Homily later at
<https://stjohnsroyaloak.org/sermons-online>

🎵 **Music:** You may want to listen to the Advent Hymn, *Lo, He come with clouds descending* here: <https://bit.ly/firstsundayinadvent>

Reflection: *Having read this scripture, think on these things: The powerful images in these readings are sometimes thought to describe endings. Consider that they also reveal new beginnings marked by the deliverance from the evil, darkness, and injustice in the world. What are signs that ‘new birth’ is coming? How will you “keep awake” and watch for them?*

The Prayers

Please offer the prayers of your heart with each petition.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, its members, and its mission, the love, mercy and service it brings to those in need

This nation, our cities, and neighborhoods, and for all in authority

The welfare of the world, and the care of creation

The St. John’s family and for concerns of the local community

Those who suffer and those who have died

Thanksgivings and the blessings of this life

Those we love, and those who have asked for our prayers

Those things for which we wait, watch, and hope

The Lord’s Prayer

Closing Prayer

Worship and praise belong to you always and everywhere, God our maker. Out of nothing, you called all worlds to be, and still you draw the universe to its fulfillment. Dawn and evening celebrate your glory till time shall be no more. As children of your redeeming purpose who await the coming of your Son, we offer you our praise, with Angels and Archangels and the whole company of heaven, who adore you this day and throughout eternity. **Amen.**

Going Out

Go in peace, live in love, seek to be holy in all that you do.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND SUNDAY in ADVENT+ December 6



The Second Sunday of Advent reminds us that, throughout our history, God has sent prophets, heralds, angels, and truth-tellers to show us a path and to point us in a new direction. Both the Prophet Isaiah and John the Baptist tell us to “Prepare the way of Lord”, to prepare our hearts and minds for what is to come, and – to use a metaphor of ‘leveling’ – to level out the steep and jagged paths and to fill in the low places for those on the road so that everyone can walk in the way of justice.

Guided Meditation: *Write a list of three or more specific things that you commit to actively preparing for in your life/family/community in the year to come. Place the list in your holy place (prayer space) as a prayer that God will shape and prepare you for things to come.*



Light the Second Candle of the Advent Wreath: *Today, light the second candle (blue or purple), think about what peace and justice look like in our world, and offer a prayer expressing how you want God to help you prepare for and co-create it.*

Advent Acclamation

Presider Make straight the paths we now walk
People **And prepare the way for God’s reign of justice and love.**
Presider †Blessed be God: Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit.
People **And blessed be God’s kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 40:1-5

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

†The Gospel

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”



At 10:00am on Sunday

Homily

The Ven. Tim Spannaus

Join Sunday Morning Online Worship at 10:00am on December 6 at **Zoom Meeting:** <https://bit.ly/StJohnWorship> or call 646-558-8656 Meeting ID: 945 6437 5922 or watch the Homily later at <https://stjohnsroyaloak.org/sermons-online>

🎵 **Music:** You may want to listen to *Every valley shall be exalted* from *Handel’s Messiah* here: <https://bit.ly/secondsundayinadvent>

Reflection: *Having read this scripture, think on these things: What dream of yours is waiting to be born? Is there something in your spirit that needs to be comforted, or confronted, or forgiven in order for you to clear a space for its unfolding? Offer these things in the form of a conversational prayer to the Holy Spirit.*

Confession

Leader People of God, let us trust in God's love for us and confess our sin, confident in Christ's mercy.

People **God of justice, you have sent us prophets
and we have not listened.
We have not made way for your reign in our lives,
our church, our communities, and our world.
We live in fear, as if there were no grace.
Forgive us, we pray, and renew your covenant within us,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.***

Leader Friends, we are confident of this:
If we repent, God is sure to forgive us.
The One who began a good work in us will bring it to completion.
†Our sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. ***Amen.***

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer

Worship and praise belong to you always and everywhere, God our maker. Out of nothing, you called all worlds to be, and still you draw the universe to its fulfillment. Dawn and evening celebrate your glory till time shall be no more. As children of your redeeming purpose who await the coming of your Son, we offer you our praise, with Angels and Archangels and the whole company of heaven, who adore you this day and throughout eternity. ***Amen.***

Going Out

Go in peace, live in love, seek to be holy in all that you do.
Thanks be to God.

THIRD SUNDAY in ADVENT+ December 13



The Third Sunday of Advent, sometimes called Guadete Sunday (which means ‘Rejoice’), reminds us that there is joy and reason to rejoice as we await the birth of Jesus. Mary rejoices in God’s greatness and God’s promises of mercy and justice. On the Third Sunday of Advent we honor Mary and celebrate her courage, strength, and faithfulness.

Guided Meditation: *Write the names of women who have been influential in your life, who have modeled courage or faith or strength for you. Place the list in your holy place (prayer space) and give thanks and rejoice for the witness these women offered to you.*



Light the Third Candle of the Advent Wreath: *Add an item to your holy place that brings you joy; perhaps a photograph of those you love, or a flower (a rose is the traditional flower in churches around the world on this Guadete Sunday), or a symbol of something that brings you hope. As you light the third candle of the Advent Wreath (traditionally a pink candle in honor of Mary) make this your daily prayer:*

God of the waiting, help us to set our hearts and minds on the here and now, and to remember to Rejoice! and be thankful for what matters, especially those things we now name _____ **Amen.**

Advent Acclamation

Presider Praise the Lord, O my soul:

People **Praise God’s holy name.**

Presider The glory of the Lord shall be revealed,

People **And all people shall see it together.**

Presider †Blessed be God: Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit.

People **And blessed be God’s kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

Collect for the Third Sunday in Advent

Jesus, who is Emmanuel and son of Mary, be more than just a dream in our hearts. With the apostles, prophets, and saints, save us, restore us, and lead us in the way of grace, peace, and justice, that we may bear your promise into the world. **Amen.**

Canticle 15 The Song of Mary*Magnificat Luke 1:46-55*

My soul proclaims the greatness of our God,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
who has looked with favor upon me, a lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
The Almighty God has done great things for me, and holy is God's Name.
God's mercy is from age to age, on those who are faithful.
God puts forth an arm in strength, and scatters the proud in their conceit.
God casts down the mighty from their thrones, and lifts up the lowly.
God fills the hungry with good things, and sends the rich away empty.
God has come to the help of your servant Israel.
You have remembered your promise of mercy, the promise you made to
our ancestors, to Abraham and Sarah and their children for ever.

Second Reading**1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for
this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit.
Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to
what is good; abstain from every form of evil.
May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit
and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord
Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

†The Gospel**John 1:6-8,19-28**

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a
witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He
himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.
This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and
Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did
not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him,
"What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?"
He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have
an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He
said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight
the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.
Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then
are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the
prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands
one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not
worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany
across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

At 10:00am on Sunday



Homily

The Rev. Beth Bingham

Join Sunday Morning Online Worship at 10:00am on

December 13 at **Zoom Meeting:** <https://bit.ly/StJohnWorship>

or call 646-558-8656 Meeting ID: 945 6437 5922 or watch the Homily later at <https://stjohnsroyaloak.org/sermons-online>

Music: You may want to listen to *The Canticle of the Turning* (a Celtic variation on the Magnificat) here: <https://bit.ly/thirdsundayinadvent>

Reflection: *Having read this scripture, think on these things: What in our world is changing (being cast down or lifted up), and how can Jesus be our hope in the midst of this time?*

The Prayers

Daily Prayers for All Seasons

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come again
and with us ever dwell.

For our deepest and most holy longings we pray:

Renew us, O God.

For all who wander, who hunger, who thirst:

Renew us as people of service and compassion.

For this planet, our home:

Renew our will to be healers of creation.

For this and every nation:

Renew in all people the will for good and the longing for peace.

For those whom we hold in our hearts:

Here, the people may add particular intercessions or thanksgivings.

Bless these and all creation with your goodness,

and renew our trust in your love. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

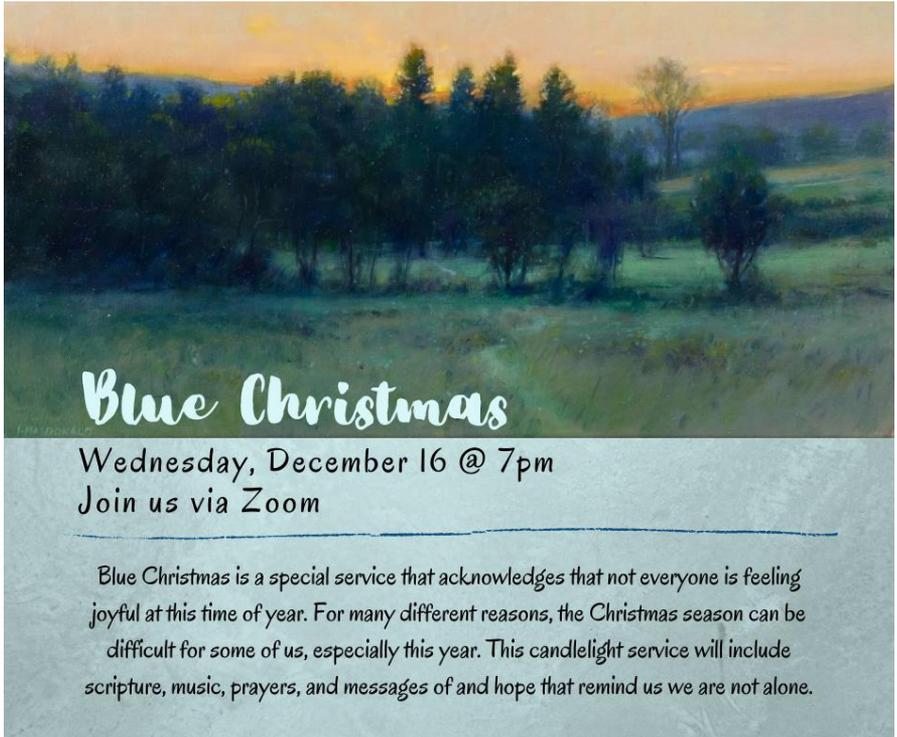
Going Out

Do not be afraid. God is with us, always.

Let us go forth to love and serve the Lord

Thanks be to God.

BLUE CHRISTMAS + Wednesday, December 16



Blue Christmas

Wednesday, December 16 @ 7pm

Join us via Zoom

Blue Christmas is a special service that acknowledges that not everyone is feeling joyful at this time of year. For many different reasons, the Christmas season can be difficult for some of us, especially this year. This candlelight service will include scripture, music, prayers, and messages of and hope that remind us we are not alone.

Your Blue Christmas bulletin, as well as everything you need to participate in this service, is included in your envelope from St. John's.

Join Zoom Meeting here:

<https://bit.ly/StJohnBlueChristmas>

Meeting ID: 940 3382 3263 Passcode: 156515

or call 646-558-8656 Meeting ID: 940 3382 3263

FOURTH SUNDAY in ADVENT+ December 20



The Fourth Sunday of Advent this year is associated with what we call ‘The Visitation’ – the Angel Gabriel comes to Mary to tell her that she will have a child. When we share this story with the children, we tell them that Mary felt the jumbled-up feelings of being scared, and kind of curious, and worried, and really confused, all at the same time. She didn’t really know what to say or do (just like we sometimes feel confused or worried about our future). But the Angel Gabriel says to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary . . . Nothing is impossible with God!”

Guided Meditation: *Write down three things that you are worried about or afraid of right now. Hold the paper in your hand. Now crumple the list up, holding it tightly in your fist. Still holding the list, imagine an angel (perhaps a bright light, a voice, a person) coming to you and saying, “Do not be afraid . . . nothing is impossible with God!” After a time, relax your grip on the paper you have in your hand; feel yourself letting go.*



Light the Fourth Advent Candle: *Place the crumpled-up paper in your holy place (prayer space). As you light the fourth candle in your Advent Wreath, (traditionally blue or purple) give thanks that God is already doing something new inside of you as you release these fears and worries.*

Advent Acclamation

Leader Hope of the world and Word of life:

People **Come, Emmanuel, come dwell with us.**

Leader In the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

Leader **Come, Emmanuel, come dwell with us.**

Collect of the Day

God of impossible love, you needed Mary to give consent, to bear the scandal, to carry your word within herself; may her courage give hope to women and men and children in our world who yearn to sing new songs of justice and peace, and to find the world a dwelling place for God; through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come. **Amen.**

A Reading

Paul's Letter to the Romans 16:25-27

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-- to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! *Amen.*

†The Gospel

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

At 10:00am on Sunday



Homily

The Rev. Beth Taylor

Join Sunday Morning Online Worship at 10:00am on

December 20 at **Zoom Meeting:** <https://bit.ly/StJohnWorship>

or call 646-558-8656 Meeting ID: 945 6437 5922 or watch the Homily later at <https://stjohnsroyaloak.org/sermons-online>



Music: You may want to listen to *The Angel Gabriel from heaven came* here: <https://bit.ly/fourthsundayinadvent>

Reflection: *Having read this scripture, think on these things: After pondering all that she saw and heard, Mary said, "Here I am." Consider now whether and how you might say 'yes' to God, even if you cannot control the outcome.*

Confession

Leader Holy God, in the midst of this season of new life, we confess:

People

We have resisted the light of your love; we have not fully shared the gifts entrusted to us; and we have not treasured the gifts of others around us. We stand in need of your love.

Holy Creator, make us holy.

Holy Jesus, make us holy.

Holy Spirit, make us holy.

Holy God, make us whole. *Amen.*

Leader

God forgives all our sins and heals all our infirmities. God lifts us from the low places and sets mercy and love upon us. God fills us with goodness and renews our lives.

Thanks be to God.

Prayers

Leader

God of grace and hope: Help us to move from fear to trust.

People

Your grace surrounds and fills us:

Leader

Remind us that you provide all we need.

People

Your healing love is offered to all:

Here, the people may add particular intercessions or thanksgivings: we pray for the church, the world, and for courage to face our fears.

The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord. And may the blessing of God, The One who creates us, the One who heals us, and the One who gives us strength and courage, bless and keep us this day and forever. ***Amen.***

Going Out

Deacon

Let us go forth to love one another, and to make peace in the world.

People

Thanks be to God.

Additional Reflection: When we are together in regular times, that many people stay after the worship service on the Fourth Sunday of Advent for a long-standing tradition called “The Greening of the Church.” We put away all the blue cloths (called paraments) of Advent, bring out the white paraments for Christmas, decorate the church with garlands of evergreen, fill the altar space with poinsettias and our creche (figurines of the Holy Family, shepherds, animals, wise kings and angels), hang ornaments on our beautiful Christmas trees, and place many candles and lights throughout the church. We do this in preparation for our Christmas Eve services. We won’t be doing these things together this year. And yet – we can prepare for the coming of the Christ Child, the Incarnate God. Wherever you are today, find ways to prepare your own space – perhaps your dining table, your seating area, your porch, your entry way, your place set apart for Christmas Eve - with some new adornment and some sign of hope.



At St. John’s, we also light hand-held candles at the point in the service where Christ’s birth is announced. As you light the final candle in your Advent Wreath (traditionally a white candle placed in the middle), say a prayer of thanksgiving that

Emmanuel, “God With Us,” is being born in our hearts again.

Also, give thanks for your St. John’s family, and picture them and other Christians all over the world lighting a candle and singing *Silent Night* along with you!



CHRISTMAS EVE + Thursday, December 24



At 5:00pm

Carols and Special Music

Join in for Carols and Special Music online at **Zoom Meeting**

<https://zoom.us/j/92137080036>, Meeting ID: 921 3708 0036

or call 646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 92137080036



At 5:30pm

Christmas Eve Service (for families)

Join in the Christmas Eve Service (especially designed for families) online at same link above or watch the service later on

<https://stjohnsroyaloak.org/sermons-online>



At 10:00pm

Carols and Special Music

Join in for Carols and Special Music online at **Zoom Meeting**

<https://zoom.us/j/92770948384>, Meeting ID: 927 7094 8384

or call 646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 92770948384



At 10:30pm

Christmas Eve Service (Solemn Service)

Join in the Christmas Eve Service (Solemn Service) online at the link above or watch the service later on

<https://stjohnsroyaloak.org/sermons-online>

A Prayer for Christmas Eve *Adaptation: Robert Louis Stevenson*

Loving God, help us to anticipate the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

CHRISTMAS DAY+ Friday, December 25



On Christmas morning, take a walk if you are able, or step outside and breathe the fresh air. Give thanks for the birth of the Christ Child, for the new day, and for all the blessings of this life. Write down something on a piece of paper or find an object that represents something from your heart that you would like to offer to the Baby Jesus to express your love and gratitude for him.

What can I give him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give Him —
Give my heart.

From "In the Bleak Midwinter" by Christina Rossetti

Remembering the tradition of St. John's, you may wish to light a candle (perhaps all the candles in your Advent Wreath) to express joy in Christ's birth.



At 10:00am on Christmas Morning

Join in the Christmas Service at the Cathedral of St. Paul, Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, with a sermon by The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie Perry online at 10:00am by visiting <https://edomi.org> and click on Watch the Sermon

A Christmas Prayer

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Book of Common Prayer

Merry Christmas

Dearest St. John's,

Continue to pray for each other, care for each other, stay connected, remain faithful, feel your feelings, ask for help, receive care from others, acknowledge your longings, and know that we serve a Risen Christ who will join us together again.

You are beloved! Peace always,

Rev. Beth T+



Giving to St. John's

We encourage you to **keep current on your pledges** or to make contributions to St. John's so that we can continue our ministries, support our staff, and care for the building during the suspension of in-person services and meetings.

- **Mail pledges/contributions** to St. John's Episcopal Church, 26998 Woodward Ave, Royal Oak, MI 48067
- **Give online** – make one-time or recurring donations with a credit card or checking account by going directly to our website:
<https://stjohnsroyaloak.org/giving>
- **Text** - Text "StJohnsRoyalOak" to 73256 and follow the donation link to select the giving opportunity of your choice
- **Bank** – Set up a personal bill pay through your bank to be issued to St. John's Episcopal Church in Royal Oak, MI



St. John's Episcopal Church

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Everyone is Welcome! Everyone Belongs!