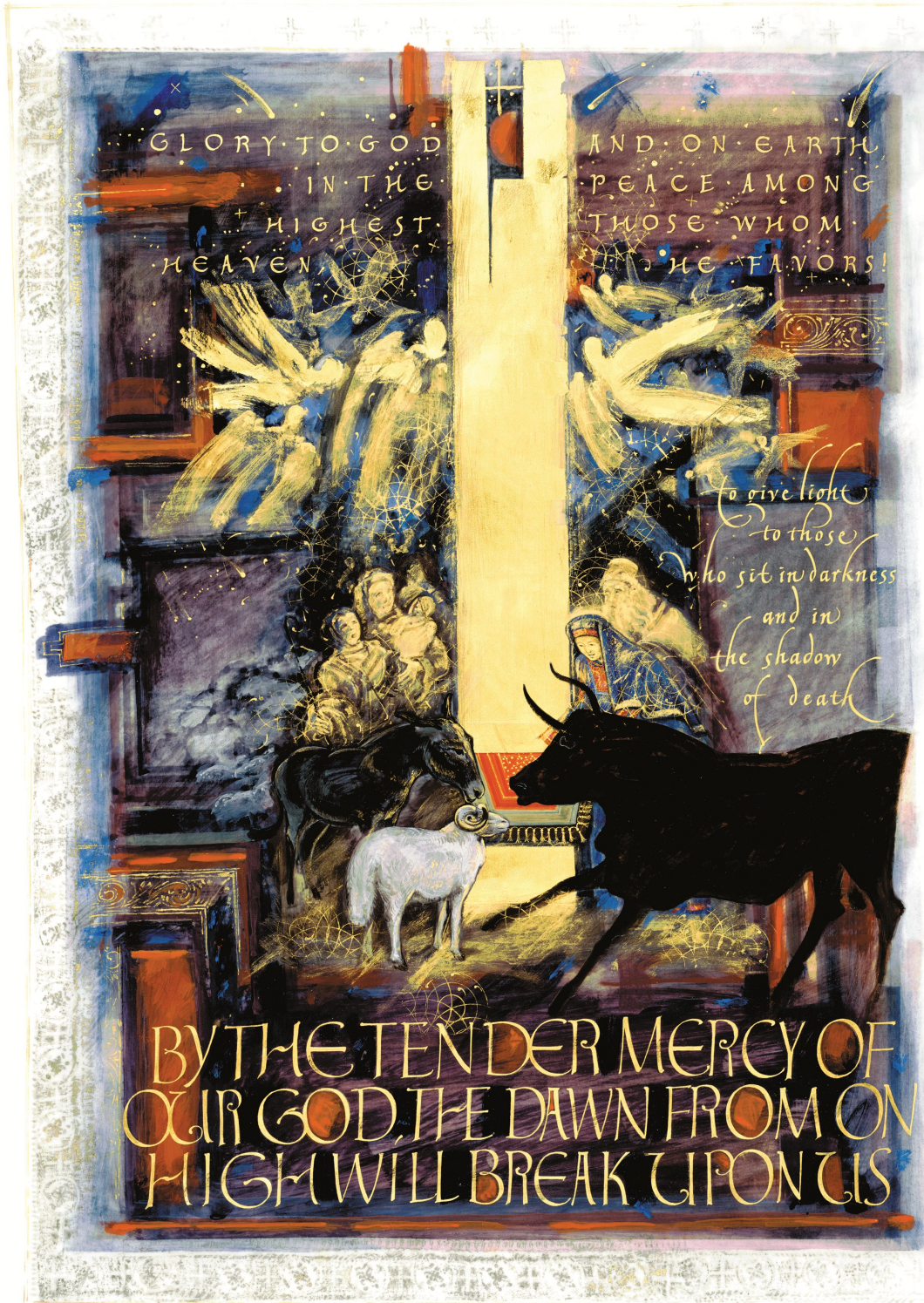


CHRISTMAS EVE

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE HOLY EUCHARIST
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2024
6:00 P.M. & 10:00 P.M.



THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Welcome to St. John's! We invite you to help create the experience of silence before our service. Our hope is to calm our hearts as we prepare to enter into an intensity of shared presence. To ensure newcomers feel welcomed, position prompts are provided throughout our bulletins. If standing or kneeling is uncomfortable for you, please know it is fine to remain seated.

Prelude **On This Day in Bethlehem**, Phred Mileski, Soloist **G. Hardy**
Sung at the 6:00pm Service

O Holy Night, Phred Mileski & Hannah Roemhild, Soloists **A. Adam**
Sung at the 10:00pm Service **Arr. A. Pandolfe**

Interlude from A Ceremony of Carols, Lindsay Haukom, Harp **B. Britten**

All rise at the sound of the bell.

Hymn 83, standing **O come, all ye faithful** **ADESTE FIDELES**

Presider Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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

Presider 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 of Praise, standing **Angels we have heard on high** **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.

Hymn continues on the next page.

Refrain

Glo - - - - - ri - a

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

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

Collect of the Day

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider 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 LITURGY OF THE WORD

You may be seated.

The First Lesson: Isaiah 9:2-7

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.

Lector Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 96 *Cantate Domino*

H.T. Smith

Sung by the choir

1 Sing to the LORD a new song; *
sing to the LORD, all the whole earth.

2 Sing to the LORD
and bless his Name; *
proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.

3 Declare his glory among the nations *
and his wonders among all peoples.

4 For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; *
he is more to be feared than all gods.

5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; *
but it is the LORD who made the heavens.

6 Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence! *
Oh, the power and the splendor of his sanctuary!

7 Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples; *
ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

8 Ascribe to the LORD the honor due his Name; *
bring offerings and come into his courts.

9 Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; *
let the whole earth tremble before him.

10 Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is King! *
he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity."

11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; *
let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

12 Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy
before the LORD when he comes, *
when he comes to judge the earth.

13 He will judge the world with righteousness *
and the peoples with his truth.

The Epistle: Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Lector Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People **Thanks be to God**

Hymn 78, *standing* O little town of Bethlehem

FOREST GREEN

The Holy Gospel Luke 2:1-20, *standing*

Presider The Holy Gospel of our Savior 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.

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

The Sermon

The Rev. Wilbert "Wilk" Miller

Silence and stillness are kept after the sermon.

Prayers of the People, standing

Intercessor The Word has been made flesh, the light of God's love has broken through our darkness, the Daystar from on high now shines in our hearts. Filled with the joy of Jesus' birth, let us pray together in the power of his Spirit, responding, "Lord, hear our prayer."

That the Prince of Peace may guide the leaders of the nations, and all men and women everywhere, into the ways of freedom and truth; let us pray.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Intercessor For Sean Rowe, Presiding Bishop of our Church, and Jeff Mello and Laura Ahrens, our Bishops, that they may guide us in our journey to Bethlehem, uniting the whole Church as we live into our spiritual kinship with one another; let us pray.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Intercessor For those for whom the darkness has suffocated hope: the lonely, the fearful, the hungry, and those who bear a private grief; that they may see the dawn of God's love, and revive the eternal hope that never fades away; let us pray.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Intercessor For our families and friends, and for all our absent sisters and brothers; for those who are sick, and for those who have died and who now feast at the heavenly banquet of God's grace; let us pray.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Intercessor That we may be released from the captivity of our sins, the places of interior blindness that cause us to choose darkness over light; that we may be forgiven by the power of the Holy Spirit; let us pray.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Intercessor That we who gather to share the Holy Eucharist, and those throughout the world who come to receive this sacrament of Holy Presence, may bear witness to Christ born in our hearts; let us pray.

People **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Intercessor In the wonder of this night, let us continue to offer our petitions.
The people offer their own intercessions aloud or in the silence of their hearts.

Intercessor Hasten, O Father, the coming of your kingdom; and grant that we your servants, who now live by faith, may with joy behold your Son at his coming in glorious majesty; even Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. **Amen.**

The Peace, all standing

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Then the ministers and people may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Welcome, you may be seated

THE LITURGY OF THE TABLE

Offertory Sentence

Presider Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his Name; bring offerings and come into his courts.

The congregation's offering for the mission and ministry of the church is received. Please be seated.

Anthem Candlelight Carol

J. Rutter

How do you capture the wind on the water? How do you count all the stars in the sky? How can you measure the love of a mother? Or how can you write down a baby's first cry? Candlelight, angel light, firelight and star-glow shine on his cradle 'til breaking of dawn. Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo! Angels are singing "The Christ child is born." Shepherds and wise men will kneel and adore him. Seraphim 'round him, their vigil will keep. Nations proclaim him their Lord and their saviour, but Mary will hold him and sing him to sleep. Candlelight, angel light, firelight and star-glow shine on his cradle 'til breaking of dawn. Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo! Angels are singing "The Christ child is born." Find him in Bethlehem laid in a manger, Christ our redeemer, asleep in the hay. Godhead incarnate and hope of salvation, a child with his mother that first Christmas Day. Candlelight, angel light, firelight and star-glow shine on his cradle 'til breaking of dawn. Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo! Angels are singing "The Christ child is born."

Presentation, standing

The congregation's gifts of bread, wine, and money are presented and placed on the Holy Table.

The Great Thanksgiving: *Eucharistic Prayer B*

Presider The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Presider Lift up your hearts.
People **We lift them to the Lord.**
Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and every-where 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 perfect Man 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:

Sanctus *from Deutsche Messe*

F. Schubert

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, as the Presider 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.

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 sons and daughters; 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.**

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

The Lord's Prayer, said by all

**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

A period of silence is kept.



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 Invitation to Communion

Presider The Gifts of God for the People of God. Holy things for holy people. All seeking God are welcome at Christ's Table to receive Holy Communion or a blessing. For a blessing, place your hands across your chest. Gluten-free bread is available for those requiring it. Please indicate this by holding one arm across your chest. If you are unable to come forward, ask an usher or someone nearby to request that communion be brought to you.

Motet Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming

ES IST EIN ROS

Hymn 94 While shepherds watched their flocks by night

WINCHESTER OLD

Motet In the Bleak Midwinter

H. Darke

In the bleak midwinter frosty winds made moan, Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, In the bleak midwinter long ago. Our God, Heav'n cannot hold him nor earth sustain; Heav'n and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign: In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed. The Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ. Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day, A breastful of milk and a mangerful of hay: Enough for him, whom angels fall down before, The ox and ass and camel which adore. Angels and archangels may have gathered there, Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air; but only his mother in her maiden bliss Worshipped the Beloved with a kiss. 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.

Prayer after Communion, standing

Presider

Let us pray together.

We give you thanks, O God, for you have visited your people. In the human frailty of your Son Jesus Christ you have revealed the face of divinity. Gather into your arms all the people of the world, so that in your embrace we might share your peace and goodwill which is the inheritance of your children everywhere. Amen.

All sing the following hymn. The lights will be turned off during this hymn.

Hymn, kneeling

Silent night, holy night

STILLE NACHT

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, all is calm,
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, shep - herds quake
 3 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.

The Blessing, *standing*

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. And may Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Hymn 87, *standing* **Hark! the herald angels sing**

MENDELSSOHN

The Dismissal

Presider Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude **In dulci jubilo**, *BWV 729*

J.S. Bach

Gospel Image: *Stalingrad Madonna*, Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, Berlin.

Christmas Day | December 25

10 a.m. | Christmas Service with Communion & Special Music

All are welcome for a beautiful, simple service of Holy Eucharist to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

The Pastoral Care Team Needs Card Writers For 2025

Members of the pastoral care team send monthly cards to members and friends of our congregation who have health issues, are homebound, or have recently suffered a death in the family. For 2025, we need 3-4 more scribes to "sign on" to write cards.

At the beginning of each month, the list of recipients is reviewed and an updated list is sent to the card writer. The office has cards and stamps that can be used or you can provide your own. The project does not involve a huge amount of time. If you are interested in helping with this much appreciated outreach, please contact Peggy Tuttle at peggytuttle@gmail.com.

2024 Pledge Completion Reminder

Pledging Statements were mailed out the third week of November as a final reminder to fulfill your 2024 pledge commitment to St. John's. Your commitment to us means our ministries at St. John's will continue to thrive. It also allows us to continue to grow and thrive with our beloved ministry partners throughout the year. We thank you for committing your time, talent, and treasure to us each year. We invite you to fulfill your commitment online or through the mail (P.O. Box 422, Essex, CT 06426). Please remember to fulfill your pledge before the end of the year. If your envelope is not postmarked before or on December 31, we must put your donation towards 2025. Please indicate on the memo for pledge. 2024 Final Giving Statements will be mailed around the first week of February.

Stewardship Envelopes

The stewardship envelopes will be available for pick-up in the Parish Hall near the coat rack in January. A date will be determined in the New Year. If you didn't indicate on your pledge card that you would like envelopes this year, please let Chelsea know in the office (860-767-8095 ext. 10 or chelsea@stjohnsessex.org). Thank you!

Middlesex Habitat for Humanity: Donate to ReStore

Bring your holiday decor items to one of their two holiday decor donation drives. Habitat is currently looking for winter season decorations, artificial trees, wreaths, garlands, lights, ornaments, menorahs, kinaras, yard displays, figurines, dishes, etc.

Please make sure items are complete, in good condition, and fully functional.

Saturday, January 11th and 18th from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Please bring donations to the rear of the building for assistance. All donations can be brought to their Restore facility (34 Shunpike Road, Cromwell, CT).

Parish Office News

Parish Office Closed for Holiday Vacation

As is customary, the St. John's office will be closed between Christmas and New Year's. This year, the office team will not be working remotely or in-office from December 24 to January 1. We will resume regular operations on Wednesday, January 2, 2024.

Please Note: If there is a pastoral need, call the office at 860-767-8095 and leave a message. The phone system will be checked daily. Non-urgent calls will be returned by the appropriate staff member after the office reopens.

Thank you, and have a wonderful holiday!

Christmas Break Schedule: Tuesday Bible Study & Wednesday Eucharist

Tuesday Bible Study:

There will be no sessions on December 24 and December 31. We'll resume on January 7, 2025.

Wednesday Eucharist:

No services on December 25 and January 1. Wednesday Eucharist will resume on January 8, 2025. We look forward to seeing everyone in the New Year!

CLERGY & PARISH STAFF

The Rev. Carol Gadsden, *Interim Co-Pastor*
carol@stjohnsessex.org / 860-767-8095 x.12

The Rev. Wilk Miller, *Interim Co-Pastor*
wilk@stjohnsessex.org / 860-767-8095 x.12

Chelsea DiDonato, *Communications Director & Parish Administrator*
chelsea@stjohnsessex.org / 860.767.8095 x. 10

Anthony Pandolfe Jr., *Director of Music & Organist*
anthony@stjohnsessex.org / 860.767.8095 x.17

Allison Fresher, *Minister of Worship Life*
allison@stjohnsessex.org

Meghan Wrinn, *Program & Events Coordinator*
meghan@stjohnsessex.org

Manuel Matute, *Sexton*
Dayle Larson, *Bookkeeper*

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY LEADERS

Nancy Haslam, *Prayer Shawl Ministry*
Marlene Going, *Weekly Food Collection*
Stephanie Patterson, *Altar Guild*
Peggy Tuttle, *Pastoral Care Card Ministry*
Jennifer Miller, *Meal Ministry*
Ernie Brainard, *Candle Master*
Paulette Rider, *Outreach Committee*
Jan Perruccio, *Newcomers Committee*

VOLUNTEER PROFESSIONALS

Bill Scharfenstein, *Building and Grounds*
Greg Perruccio, *Stewardship Chair*
Dave Rogers, *Treasurer*
Clio Coles, *Assistant Treasurer*
Shawn Honan, *Investment Oversight Committee*

VESTRY Scott Konrad, *Warden*; Sandy Loether, *Warden*; Anne Littlefield, *Vestry Clerk*;
Dave Rogers *Treasurer*; Carol Beisser, Lois Blood Bennett, Tony Custodio, Nat Eddy,
Wesley Henry, Stephanie Patterson, Patti Pickering, Rob van der Horst, Kevin Walsh

**WORSHIP**

SUNDAYS | Holy Eucharist — 8:00 & 10:15 a.m.

TUESDAYS | Bible Study — 10:00 a.m.

WEDNESDAYS | Midweek Holy Eucharist — 12:00 p.m.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

3 Cross Street, / (P.O. Box 422) Essex, CT 06426

860.767.8095 | www.stjohnsessex.org