

A painting of a person walking down a path in a forest at night. The path is illuminated by a bright light in the distance, creating a strong glow and reflection on the ground. The trees are dark and bare, and the sky is filled with soft, glowing light and small stars. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

# **Contemplative Christmas**

**A Service for Hope and Healing**

**The Feast of St. Thomas**

**Thursday, December 21, 2023**

**7 pm**

**St. Martin-in-the Fields  
Episcopal Church**

# CONTEMPLATIVE CHRISTMAS

## A SERVICE FOR HOPE AND HEALING

Tonight's liturgy unites us with Christ through ritual, language, silence, song, candlelight, oil, and bread. All Christians are invited to the Table of our Lord.

If praying is difficult tonight, we invite you to keep this program and return to this prayer, as you are able:

Gracious God, only source of life and health: Help, comfort, and relieve me, and give your power of healing to those who minister to my needs; that my weakness may be turned to strength and confidence in your loving care; for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### PRELUDE

*Little Drummer Boy*

### HYMN 79

*O little Town of Bethlehem*

St. Louis

*The people's responses are in bold.*

*Celebrant* Grace and peace be with you, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
*People* **And also with you.**  
*Celebrant* Let us pray.

O God of peace, you have taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be our strength: By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray, to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### COLLECT OF THE DAY

Page 237, Book of Common Prayer

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.  
*People* **And also with you.**  
*Celebrant* Let us pray.

Everliving God, who strengthened your apostle Thomas with firm and certain faith in your Son's resurrection: Grant us so perfectly and without doubt to believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God, that our faith may never be found wanting in your sight; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### A READING FROM THE PROPHET HABAKKUK

Habakkuk 2:1-4

I will stand at my watchpost,  
and station myself on the rampart;  
I will keep watch to see what he will say to me,  
and what he will answer concerning my complaint.  
Then the Lord answered me and said:  
Write the vision;  
make it plain on tablets,  
so that a runner may read it.  
For there is still a vision for the appointed time;  
it speaks of the end, and does not lie.  
If it seems to tarry, wait for it;  
it will surely come, it will not delay.  
Look at the proud!  
Their spirit is not right in them,  
but the righteous live by their faith.

*Lector* The Word of the Lord.  
*People* **Thanks be to God.**

1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, \*  
then were we like those who dream.  
2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, \*  
and our tongue with shouts of joy.  
3 Then they said among the nations, \*  
"The Lord has done great things for them."  
4 The Lord has done great things for us, \*  
and we are glad indeed.  
5 Restore our fortunes, O Lord, \*  
like the watercourses of the Negev.  
6 Those who sowed with tears \*  
will reap with songs of joy.  
7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, \*  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

**A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS**

Hebrews 10:35-11:1

Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

For yet "in a very little while,  
the one who is coming will come and will not delay;  
but my righteous one will live by faith.  
My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back."

But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

*Lector* The Word of the Lord.  
*People* **Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 111***Silent Night, Holy Night*

Stille Nacht

**THE HOLY GOSPEL**

John 20:24-29

*Celebrant* The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to John.  
*People* **Glory to you, O Christ.**

Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with the other disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

*Deacon* The Gospel of Christ.  
*People* **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON**

The Rev. Alan D. Bentrup

*A period of silent reflection follows the Sermon*

## LITANY OF HEALING

*All stand. The Celebrant introduces the Litany with this bidding:*

Let us name before God those for whom we offer our prayers.

*The People audibly name those for whom they are interceding*

*Officiant* Gracious God, we come to you as Christmas approaches. As the nights have been growing longer, the darkness around us has deepened. In this season of our longest nights, we offer to you all that we hold in our hearts. Loving God, hear our prayer.

*People* **And answer with your love.**

*Officiant* God of all, we are not alone in our loss and sadness. Be with all those whose lives are touched by sadness during the Christmas season. Let your peace fill the world tonight. Loving God, hear our prayer

*People* **And answer with your love.**

*Officiant* Compassionate God, grant your healing grace to all who are sick, injured, or disabled, that they may be made whole;

*People* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Officiant* Grant to all who seek your guidance, and to all who are lonely, anxious, or despondent, a knowledge of your will and an awareness of your presence;

*People* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Officiant* Mend broken relationships, and restore those in emotional distress to soundness of mind and serenity of spirit;

*People* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Officiant* Bless physicians, nurses, and all others who minister to the suffering, granting them wisdom and skill, sympathy and patience;

*People* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Officiant* Grant to the dying peace and a holy death, and uphold by the grace and consolation of your Holy Spirit those who are bereaved;

*People* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Officiant* You are the Lord who does wonders;

*People* **You have declared your power among the peoples.**

*Officiant* With you, O Lord, is the well of life;

*People* **And in your light, we see light.**

*Officiant* Hear us, O Lord of life:

*People* **Heal us, and make us whole.**

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen**



## THE PEACE

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

## OFFERTORY

*Please take a few moments to offer yourself - your time, your talents, your gifts, and your service to God with a prayer that your offering may be pleasing in God's sight, spread God's love, and make a difference in God's world. You may text 817-270-6880 with an amount + GENERAL or PLEDGE to give or you may scan this QR code to give online, or [click HERE](#).*



## OFFERTORY HYMN 81

*Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming*

Est ist ein Ros

## HYMN AT THE PRESENTATION 380 ST. 3

OLD 100TH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING, EUCHARISTIC PRAYER A

Page 361 Book of Common Prayer

*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.**  
*Celebrant*

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who was tempted in every way as we are, yet did not sin. By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil, and to live no longer for ourselves alone, but for him who died for us and rose again.

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 HYMN S 130

*Holy, Holy, Holy*

Schubert

### *The Celebrant continues*

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

*At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing the wine to be consecrated.*

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, 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 we proclaim the mystery of faith:

*Celebrant and People*

**Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

*The Celebrant continues*

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. 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,

*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**

**THE HOLY COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMN 101**                                  *Away in a manger*                                  Cradle Song

**THE PRAYER OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP**                                  Page 366 Book of Common Prayer

*Celebrant and 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 BLESSING**

**CLOSING HYMN 112**                                  *In the Bleak Midwinter*                                  Cranham

**THE DISMISSAL**

**POSTLUDE**                                  *Ring Christmas Bells*



## **Our Staff**

The Rev. Alan Bentrup, Rector  
alan.bentrup@stmartininthefields.org

The Rev. Gavin Tomlin, Curate  
gavin.tomlin@stmartininthefields.org

The Rev. Ayo Omoniyi, Deacon  
ayo.omoniyi@stmartininthefields.org

Tony Kroll, Seminarian

Liza Goodner, Director of Children & Family Ministries  
liza.goodner@stmartininthefields.org

Bob Duquesnel, Organist & Choir Master  
bob.duquesnel@stmartininthefields.org

Sue Mitchell, Financial Manager  
sue.mitchell@stmartininthefields.org

Anika Rinker, Parish Administrator  
stmartin@stmartininthefields.org

Bob Bess, Senior Warden  
bob.bess@stmartininthefields.org

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**St. Martin-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church**  
**223 South Pearson Lane • P.O. Box 1149 (76244)**  
**Keller, Texas 76248**  
**Ph) 817•431•2396**  
**Txt) 682•338•4485**