Welcome to Worship: Thank you for making Grace-St. Luke’s part of your spiritual journey and for joining us today for this virtual worship offering. If you are new among us, please complete an online Connect Card at gracestlukes.org/online-visitor-card. Our clergy-staff team would like to reach out to learn more about you and to explore how life at Grace-St. Luke’s might bless your journey and you bless ours. For more about our thriving faith community including online formation (learning) offerings, please visit www.gracestlukes.org.

Celebrant: The Rev. Ollie V. Rencher

Preacher: The Rev. Canon Sharon A. Alexander

Voluntary: “In the bleak midwinter”

Allen Orton Gibbs

Welcome, Announcements and Children’s Message
The Word of God

Hymn 93, stanzas 1 & 3-4, “ANGELS, FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY”  music: Regent Square, Henry Thomas Smart (1813-1879)
text: James Montgomery (1771-1854), alt.

1 Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o’er all the earth; ye, who sang creation’s story,
2 Shepherds in the field a-biding, watch o’er your flocks by night, God with you is now residing;
3 Sages, leave your contemplations; brighter visions beam a-far: seek the great Desire of nations; hope and fear, suddenly the Lord, descending,
4 Saints before the altar bending, watch long in now proclaim Messiah’s birth: yonder shines the infant Light; ye have seen his natal star: in his temple shall appear:

Refrain

come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

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

People  And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

The Collect for Purity
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.

The Collect of the Day

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

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born this day of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah

Thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, “Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel.” See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.” For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the Lord.

Lector The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God. Silence
Psalm 84:1-8 read responsively by whole verse

1 How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts! *
   My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord;
   my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

2 The sparrow has found her a house
   and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; *
   by the side of your altars, O Lord of hosts,
   my King and my God.

3 Happy are they who dwell in your house! *
   they will always be praising you.

4 Happy are the people whose strength is in you! *
   whose hearts are set on the pilgrims’ way.

5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs, *
   for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.

6 They will climb from height to height, *
   and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.

7 Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; *
   hearken, O God of Jacob.

8 Behold our defender, O God; *
   and look upon the face of your Anointed.

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians

1:3-6,15-19a

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe.

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

The Gospel

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew. 2:13-15,19-23

After the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.” When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazorean.”

Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord
People Praise to you, Lord Christ.
The Homily: The Rev. Canon Sharon A. Alexander

The Priest invites the People to stand for The Nicene Creed.
We believe in one God, 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: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. 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 and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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.

The Priest invites the People to stand or kneel for the

The Prayers of the People, Form III

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
That we all may be one.
Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
That your Name may be glorified by all people.
We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;
That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.
We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;
That there may be justice and peace on the earth.
Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;
That they may be delivered from their distress.
Give to the departed eternal rest, especially Tom Cates and Robert Harrison;
Let light perpetual shine upon them.
We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;
May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others, including thanksgivings for the gifts of time, talent, and treasure that support life at Grace-St. Luke’s; for our School and all schools that serve our community; for the Anglican Communion, The Episcopal Church, and the Diocese of West Tennessee; for the baptism of Ruby Catheryne Ward, daughter of Clair McCalla and Robert Ward, and granddaughter of Mary and Jon McCalla, and for all individuals, communities, and organizations working tirelessly and creatively to respond to the needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor. Silence may be kept.
Minister and People
Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The Priest says
Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.
The Peace

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

The Celebrant and People greet one another in the name of the Lord.

The Offertory

During the offertory music or following this service, your offering supports this virtual ministry and much more of life at Grace-St. Luke’s: visit gracestlukes.org/onlinegiving; text GSLChurch ALMS to 73256 to give to ALMS; text GSLChurch PLEDGE to 73256 to give to your PLEDGE; or you may mail offerings to the church office. Our 2021 stewardship campaign, Resilience and Connection by Giving, is seeking 100% participation from all parishioners: visit gracestlukes.org/pledge. For information about worship, formation for all ages, ways to connect, serve and more, visit www.gracestlukes.org.

Anthem at the Offertory

“UNT0 US IS BORN A Son”

Unto us is born a Son.
King of quires supernal:
See on earth his life begun,
Of lords the Lord eternal.

Christ, from heav’n descending low,
Comes on earth a stranger;
Ox and ass their owner know,
Be cradled in the manger.

This did Herod sore affray,
And grievously bewilder,
So he gave the word to slay,
And slew the little childer.

Of his love and mercy mild
This the Christmas story;
And O that Mary’s gentle Child
Might lead us up to glory.

O and A, and A and O,
Cum cantibus in chora,
Let our merry organ go,
Benedicamus Domino.

The Lord’s Prayer

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

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.

Spiritual Communion Prayers

These rich words are recited daily throughout the church catholic (universal) by individuals and communities unable to gather for public worship for whatever reason, while also longing for the occasion to participate in the Episcopal Church’s central practice of receiving the Holy Sacrament.

In union, blessed Jesus, with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day, and remembering particularly Grace-St. Luke’s and those worshiping there, I long to offer praise and thanksgiving, for creation and all the blessings of this life, for the redemption won for us by your life, death, and resurrection, for the means of grace and the hope of glory, and particularly for the blessings given me.

I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament, and, since I cannot at this time receive communion, I pray you to come into my heart. I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart, my soul, and my mind. Let nothing separate me from you; let me serve you in this life until, by your grace, I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace. Amen.

Come Lord Jesus, and dwell in my heart in the fullness of your strength; be my wisdom and guide me in right pathways; conform my life and actions to the image of your holiness; and, in the power of your gracious might, rule over every hostile power that threatens or disturbs the growth of your kingdom, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.
The Blessing
May Christ, who by his Incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

Hymn 1115, “WHAT CHILD IS THIS”

Unison or harmony

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on
2 Why lies he in such mean estate where
3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come,

Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with ox and ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear for peasant, king, to own him; the King of kings sal-

an-thems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping? sin-ners here the silent Word is pleading. va-tion brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.

Refrain

This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste to

bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.
The Dismissal

The people are dismissed with these words

Minister  Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
People  Thanks be to God.

Voluntary: “IMPROVISATION on GREENSLEEVES”  Patrick A. Scott

Continue the day, giving thanks to God for blessings known and known, and by reaching out in care for fellow parishioners, neighbors, and any persons in need. Members of the parish with any needs or pastoral concerns: email pastoralcare@gracestlukes.org or dial 901-252-6320, and for hospitalizations or emergencies, dial the 24/7 Clergy-on-Call phone line at 901-252-6334.

The Rev. Ollie V. Rencher, Celebrant
The Rev. Canon Sharon A. Alexander, Preacher
Dr. Patrick A. Scott, Director of Music & Organist
Elizabeth Hornor, Isabel Wittman, Charles McGowan, & Andrew Carroll, Cantors
Lucy Owens, Communications Administrator
Weekly Message from the Clergy

Creating A Better World. Christmas, the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, invites us to be and do better in the name of the One for whom we wait during Advent. The birth of Christ the Savior, who was born into conditions that paradoxically mirror modern forms of poverty, division, and exclusion, was the mysterious delivery and revelation of the One we are called to follow. Today, particularly as the world journeys through the COVID-19 pandemic, Christians intentionally are called to ponder how we might respond to Christmas with our own lives. – The Rev. Ollie V. Rencher (Full text and video available here: www.gracestlukes.org/news/christmas-message-from-the-rector.)

Take Note: New Highlights

GSL Pausing In-Person Services. The Rev. Ollie V. Rencher, Rector, shared an important message regarding diocesan faith communities pausing in-person offerings effective December 21 and beginning several weeks of virtual only on Christmas Eve. Follow this link for details: www.gracestlukes.org/COVID19.

New Opportunities for a New Year. Read below for how to get involved with Outreach.

The Feast of the Epiphany, Wednesday, January 6, 6 p.m. Virtual Burning of the Greens with homily and music will be available live on the GSL website and Facebook. The Advent-Christmas greenery used to decorate our buildings will be burned by the clergy.

Ongoing events, less recent news, and more, explore below: Worship and Music, Virtual Offerings, Stewardship, Christian Formation, Athletics, Recreation, and Wellness, Community Life, Outreach, and Quick Links.

Worship and Music

SUNDAY
10:30 a.m. Virtual Service of Morning Prayers with sermon and music. Live on the GSL website and Facebook. Sunday morning adult formation (9:15 a.m.) and Sunday evening contemplative events (5:30 p.m.) will resume on January 10.

WEEKDAYS
Tuesdays and Thursdays, Compline (Night Prayers), 8 until 8:15 p.m. via Facebook Live.

For more information about worship, visit www.gracestlukes.org/worship; music, visit www.gracestlukes.org/music; and sacramental life events, visit www.gracestlukes.org/connect/in-the-church/life-events.

Stewardship: Time, Talent, Treasure

What Can I Give Christ? One of the most moving poems associated with Christmas is Christina Rossetti’s “In the Bleak Midwinter,” which speaks movingly of Christ’s gift to us and our response. As we pray this Christmas, let us remember all of the ways we give through and to our parish church, Grace-St. Luke’s. In the bleak, seemingly endless season that has been 2020, Grace-St. Luke’s has sought to be both a source of community and connection as well as a beacon of hope. So many have come together to find creative ways of supporting one another and those in need. Now, as we look to the future with the light of Christ in us, we do so in hopes that with God’s help and your support, the fullness of our community will be restored in 2021. As we long for that future, we rejoice in the ways our parish stands together, provides for one another, and gives to the church. The next year may continue to look different for a while, but our call and our response as followers of Christ remain the same. With your generous and faithful gifts, Grace-St. Luke’s can continue doing what love requires of us by nurturing ministries both inside and outside our parish walls. Please prayerfully consider how you can serve and give to our church and make a pledge for 2021 at www.gracestlukes.org/pledge.

Christian Formation

Adults
Sunday morning and weekday formation offerings resume on January 10 according to the new and developing Winter 2021 Adult Formation schedule at www.gracestlukes.org/discover/adult-formation.

Youth
Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to you and your family! EYC and youth formation will reconvene on Sunday, January 10. If you wish to be added to the Youth Formation email list, contact Director of Youth Formation Amzie Williams (awilliams@gracestlukes.org).

Children
Thank you everyone who submitted photos and videos for our GSL Youth & Children Holiday Greetings and Christmas Pageant. It turned out beautifully! Heartfelt gratitude goes to Mr. Jeff White, Director of Technology at GSL School, whose time and talent made this video possible. If you haven’t seen it yet, it’s available for viewing at tinyurl.com/GSLChristmasPageant2020. Enjoy!

The Virtual Prayer Table will resume this Sunday, January 3. All children are welcome to attend! Zoom link sent via email on Saturdays. For more information or to be added to the Children’s Formation email list, please contact Director of Children’s Formation Sharon Campbell (scampbell@gracestlukes.org).

Athletics, Recreation, and Wellness

The GSL Church Walking Group is canceled until further notice.

YOGA WITH SHANTIH. No need to let holiday stress get under your skin - join us for a weekly yoga class to help combat the holiday-crazy! The benefits of yoga range from stress reduction, physical balance and strength to improved energy, flexibility and relaxation. Shantih’s class is distinguished by the knowledge, experience and practice that only 19 years of teaching can provide. Class will focus on proper body alignment while practicing the traditional yoga postures. Options will be offered to make the poses more or less demanding depending one’s personal interest/ability level. Come join us! Follow this link (www.gracestlukes.org/events/yoga-with-shantih) for signup details and Zoom info.

2021 WINTER BASKETBALL PROGRAM. This Winter, GSL Church is offering a 7-week (8 Sessions) Basketball Program to include Fundamental Training & Skill Development/Skill Stations/Contests/Scrimsages & Tons of FUN! Follow this link for details: www.gracestlukes.org/youthbasketball.
Community Life

Fire Pit Soirees have been postponed for a later date. Stay tuned for updates for a time when we can gather more freely and there is more interest.

The December-January edition of The Messenger includes news about Worship for Advent-Christmas-Epiphany, Pastoral Care, Formation for Adults, Youth and Children, Stewardship, Social Justice, Outreach, Music, Athletics, Grace-St. Luke’s Episcopal School, and more. Read online at graceslukes.org/the-messenger or download a copy.

Outreach

New Opportunities for a New Year. Merry Christmas to all (one more wish to end the Christmas Season)! A year of challenge has provided us with a host of opportunities. Your Outreach Committee has taken advantage of those opportunities, taking the first step to continue or establish partnerships in the community by awarding Community Outreach Grants to 19 agencies. In the new year, we’re asking you to join us in spreading a message of God’s love, deepening partnerships with existing Servant Ministry Partners - old friends like MIFA, Samaritan Counseling, and Camp Able - and new friends Carpenter Art Garden, Literacy Mid-South, and Indigenous Pastoral Relief (IPR). Our first need is to grow the committee to work as liaisons to these agencies and take on projects such as the grant program and engaging community partners who may or may not be grant recipients. The committee meets for an hour nine times per year (currently a virtual meeting), while sub-committees or individuals are asked to devote a few more hours to a project or working with a partner agency. Please contact any current members you may know, or email outreach@graceslukes.org for information on becoming a member.

1 Week, 1 Day at a Time at Mid-South Sober Living. We’ve all had our challenges this year, but take just a minute to think about those who have taken that brave first step away from addiction in such a stressful time. Servant Ministry Partner Mid-South Sober Living provides transitional housing centers for people who are new in recovery. Time spent in one of their centers provides individuals with the opportunity to learn to live outside of the structure of a rehabilitation program while maintaining their alcohol and drug free lifestyle. You can have a direct, positive impact on one of Mid-South Sober Living’s clients by sponsoring a one week housing scholarship. See details here (midsouthsoberliving.org/donate.html).

Quick Links

Follow these links to frequently visited pages on our website and Facebook.

- Facebook LIVE: www.facebook.com/graceslukes/live
- LIVE Virtual Worship, Music, Formation Offerings: www.graceslukes.org/live
- Hope and Good News: www.graceslukes.org/discover/spiritual-guidance
- Pastoral Care, Prayer List, and Prayer Requests: www.graceslukes.org/prayerrequest
- Subscribe to GSL, Diocesan & The Episcopal Church eNews: www.graceslukes.org/eneews
- Information about Fraudulent Emails & Text: www.graceslukes.org/news/phishing
- The Messenger, Bi-monthly Magazine: www.graceslukes.org/the-messenger
- Realm Connect: GSL Directory & More: www.graceslukes.org/realm

The Prayer List

Our prayers are asked for Brad Larson, Patty McManus, Kaye, John, Caroline Clay, Betsy Tate, Nancy Wilkerson, Kristin King, Charles Chandler, Michael Wills, Jake Seymour, Alymarie “Dooney” Twele, Annelise Ware Simmons, Felix Dae Sanders, The McKissack Family, Carolyn Wills, Amanda Adams, Joann McCanless, and Jane Gober & the Gober family.

Our prayers are asked for those who have died, especially Tom Cates, father of Cindy Cates Moore, and Robert Harrison, father of Cynthia Saatkamp, and those who have died from coronavirus.

We give thanks for those celebrating birthdays, especially Blair Bagwell, Tracy Banks, Nino Barnes, Anne Beaty, Virginia Billions, Sara Kate Burnett, Frances Cianciolo, Matt Crow, William Gooch, Grace Goodfellow, Edith Heller, Gary Kellett, Hazel King, Ryan Knoll, Tehani Kuo, Liz Lownes, Jean Lunsford, Tait Mellone, Bauer Patton, Ann Prascher, Charles Rowland, Vivian Saupe, Lewis Sloan, Daniel Swanson, Courtney Taylor, Will Taylor, Mary Linda Wardlaw, Caroline Ware, Nancy Willis, for those celebrating wedding anniversaries, especially Edith & Bob Heller and Charles & Courtney Ciaramitaro.

Prayer List and Prayer Requests. To submit a prayer request for the Prayer List, you may contact Parish House Receptionist & Ministry Associate Abby Huber (ahuber@graceslukes.org, 901-252-6336) or complete the online Prayer Request Form (www.graceslukes.org/prayerrequest). Names of persons, who have given consent for names to be printed, will be listed for one month, unless a longer period is requested. While certain concerns may be confidential between the clergy and the individual, others may not be. If you are wondering about an individual, please contact the individual directly or a member of the clergy. Intercessions are offered daily by the clergy and lay pastoral care ministers and reflected in the worship service leaflet.