

In the Name of Christ We Welcome You

Saint Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church

Temecula, California



The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Vigil for Christmas Eve at 10:30 pm & The Holy Eucharist at 11 pm
Tuesday, December 24, 2019



We're glad that you are here!

If you are a visitor, we want to greet you and get to know you.

If you have not done so, please sign the Guest Book. Whether you are looking for a church home or just passing through, we would be glad to tell you more about our congregation.

Mission Statement

To share Christ's life-changing love with all people, invite and welcome them into the Body of Christ, and equip them for worship, ministry, and service.

A Pet-Friendly Mission of the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego.

The Holy Eucharist, Rite Two

*The Congregation's spoken portions of the service are in **Bold**.*

The Hymnal is the blue hard-bound book;

'H' notation refers to Hymns, with 'S' notation referring to Service Music found at the front of the Hymnal.

The ringing of the bell signals that our worship is about to begin; please stand as you are able.

Prelude

Hymn H - 83 *O come, all ye faithful* (Stanzas 1 & 2)

Adeste fideles

A Station at the Christmas Crèche

Celebrant The word was made flesh and dwelt among us:

People **And we beheld his glory.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

Almighty and everliving God, you have given us a new revelation of your loving providence in the Coming of your Son Jesus Christ to be born of the Virgin Mary: Grant that as he shared our mortality, so we may share his eternity in the glory of your kingdom; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.

Hymn H - 83 *O come, all ye faithful* (Stanzas 3 & 6)

Adeste fideles

The Word of God

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

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

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

Celebrant Lord, have mercy.

People **Christ, have mercy.**

Celebrant Lord, have mercy.

Collect for the Nativity of Our Lord

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

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

Hymn S – 277 *Glory to God*

Hurd

First Reading

Lector A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah. (9:2-7)

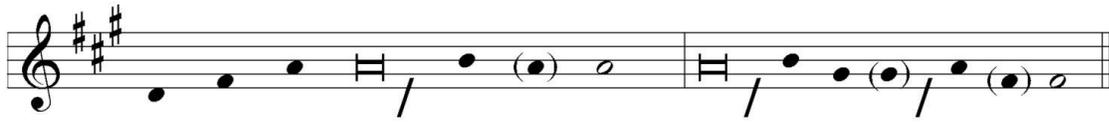
The people who walked in darkness
 have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness--
 on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation,
 you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
 as with joy at the harvest,
 as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of 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.

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

Gradual: Psalm 96 – *All sing the Psalm verses*

Plainsong





- 3 Declare his glory a-/mong 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 /sanctu-/ary!
- 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 in-/to his courts.
- 9 Worship the Lord in the beauty of /holiness; *
let the whole earth /tremble be-/fore 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

Lector A Reading from the Letter to 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.

The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Solo Anthem *Love came down at Christmas*

Stephen Sturk

Laurel McKee, soprano

The Holy Gospel

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke. (2:1-20)

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

The Sermon

The Reverend Julie D. Bryant, DMin.

The Nicene Creed

The Celebrant and People pray together, standing as they are able

**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 Prayers of the People

The Intercessor and People pray responsively, standing or kneeling as they are most comfortable

In peace, let us pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord, have mercy".

For the holy Church of God, that it may be filled with truth and love, and be found without fault at the day of your coming, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For Michael our Presiding Bishop, for Susan our Bishop, for all bishops and other ministers, and for all the holy people of God, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For all who fear God and believe in you, Lord Christ, that our divisions may cease, and that all may be one as you and the Father are one, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the world, that a spirit of respect and forbearance may grow among nations and peoples, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For those in positions of public trust, that they may serve justice, and promote the dignity and freedom of every person, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For this congregation, that we may be delivered from hardness of heart, and show forth your glory in all that we do, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For all who have commended themselves to our prayers; for our families, friends, and neighbors; that being freed from anxiety, they may live in joy, peace, and health, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For all who have died in the communion of your Church, and those whose faith is known to you alone, that, with all the saints, they may have rest in that place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal, we pray to you, O Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

Rejoicing in the fellowship of the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, blessed Thomas of Canterbury and all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life to Christ our God.
To you, O Lord our God.

After a brief silence, the Celebrant adds the following Doxology

For yours is the majesty, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Peace

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

Welcome & Announcements

Choral Anthem *On a Frosty Winter's Night*

Catalonian Carol

The Doxology *Lasst uns erfreuen*

Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; Praise him, all crea-tures here be -
low; Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, Praise him a - bove, ye heaven-ly
host: Praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

The Holy Communion

The Great Thanksgiving

Hymn S – 120 *Lift up your hearts*

Sursum corda

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 him thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you gave Jesus Christ, your only Son, to be born for us: who, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, was made 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:

Hymn S – 125 *Holy, holy, holy Lord*

Sanctus, Proulx

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

The people stand or kneel as 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.

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:

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.**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn S – 119 *The Lord's Prayer (Traditional)*

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

Celebrant and People pray together,

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

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

Fraction Anthem *Agnus Dei*

David Isele

Cantor or Choir: Em - - man - u - el, you take a - way the sins of the world,
All: have mer - cy on us. grant us peace.

To repeat *Last time*

Celebrant The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

*All baptized Christians are welcome to receive Communion; everyone is welcome to come forward for a blessing.
We use wheat-based hosts and wine for Communion; if you prefer gluten-free bread, please inform the priest.
If you are unable to go to the Altar for Communion, please notify an Usher; Communion will be brought to you.
If you would like to bring your pet with you to the Communion Rail for a blessing, please do so.*

Music during Communion

Choral Anthem *Little Christ-Child, Sweet and Holy*

Frances Williams

Hymn H - 112 *In the bleak midwinter*

Cranham

Hymn H - 82 *Of the Father's love begotten*

Divinum Mysterium

The Post-Communion Prayer

Celebrant Let us pray.

People and Celebrant, standing as they are able

Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you, as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

The Congregation is invited to kneel for the singing of

Hymn H – 111 *Silent night, holy night*

Stille Nacht

The Blessing

May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of his holiness. **Amen.**

May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel. **Amen.**

May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

Hymn H - 99 *Go tell it on the mountain*

Go Tell It...

The Dismissal

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude



Christmas Flower Dedications



In Loving Memory of Dedicated By

| | |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| My brother, Larry Huchette | <i>Melissa Christiansen</i> |
| John & Joan Tangas | <i>Viki Iredale - Tangas</i> |
| Virginia Mocker | |
| Edward Jones, husband | <i>Lani Jones</i> |
| June Spivey, mother | |
| Raymond & Mimi Klippert | <i>Cary & Jackie Klippert</i> |
| Anthony & Anna Buccola | |
| Dolly Fish & Mable Kessler | |
| Noah Ragsdale, Noah Ragsdale, Jr | <i>Bill & Andrea Liesman</i> |
| Grace Ragsdale, Joyce Ragsdale | |
| Sandy Ragsdale, Joey Brown Ragsdale | |
| Rita Riley, Gene Freeman, Marvin Moon | |
| Su Wing, Hillary Liesman, Madison Duncan | |
| Robert & Ann Ross | <i>Barbara Mina</i> |
| Ramses & Mary Mina | |
| John Ivelich & Glen Gumban | |
| Carlos Palma, Alicia Palma, Elizabeth Wessel | <i>Laura Palma</i> |
| James & Carrie Patton, Patricia Patton | <i>Joel Patton</i> |
| Herbert & Laura Webster | <i>Virginia Patton</i> |
| William R. Hilligoss & Robert L. Williamson | |
| Thomas H. Reid & Raymond Long | <i>Tom & Susan Reid</i> |
| Helen Robbins, John Robbins | <i>Harry & Mary Robbins</i> |
| Merle Chapman, her Mother, missing her | <i>Diane Swarts</i> |
| Family & friends I love but see no more | <i>Mary Lou Thomas</i> |
| Ada Marie Walton | <i>Monica & Vince Walton</i> |
| Ruby Lewis & Eric Lewis | |
| Our loved ones and Reggie | <i>Frank & Lisa Simpson</i> |
| Parents – Don & Sue MacDowell | <i>Donna Weiss</i> |

In Thanksgiving For Dedicated By

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| The Glory of God | <i>John & Carolyn Holmes</i> |
| Our family & church family and | <i>Cary & Jackie Klippert</i> |
| all that God has blessed us with. | |
| The Glory of God | <i>Phil & Ana Mibok</i> |
| My friends of support | <i>Laura Palma</i> |
| The Glory of God | <i>Ed & Kay Rather</i> |
| The Glory of God | <i>John Rbew</i> |
| Youth of St. Thomas | <i>Monica & Vince Walton</i> |
| The Glory of God | <i>Barry Weiss</i> |

Tonight's Liturgical Ministers

| Ministry | Minister |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Greeters | Lee & Irene Eisenhut |
| Ushers | Michelle Tangas, Viki Iredale-Tangas |
| Chalice Bearers | Jon Floth, Melissa Christiansen |
| Acolytes | Jon Floth, Melissa Christiansen |
| Readers | Barry Weiss, Ginna Benson |
| Intercessor | Ginna Benson |
| Altar Guild | Mary Lou Thoms, Viki Iredale-Tangas |
| Celebrant / Preacher | The Reverend Julie D. Bryant, DMin. |
| Cantor | Stephen Sturk |
| Pianist | Louie Ortiz |

Saint Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church and School

44651 Avenida de Misiones Temecula, CA 92592
 951 302 4566 www.episcopalchurchtemecula.org

Worship: Sundays, 8 and 10:15 in the morning; Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
 Preschool: Monday through Friday, 7 am to 6:30 pm

The Reverend Julie D. Bryant, DMin, Priest-in-Charge
 Ms. Sandra Guajardo, Preschool Director

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND CONSENT

Photographs and/or video may be taken today for potential use on the St. Thomas Church, St. Thomas Preschool, or diocesan websites, publications, and other church promotions (print or digital). By entering this event or service, you consent to St. Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church photographing and using your image and likeness. For more information or to opt-out, please visit www.episcopalchurchtemecula.org/opt-out.

Vigil for Christmas Eve

The ringing of the bell signals that our worship is about to begin; please stand as you are able.

The Choir processes in with the singing of the first hymn. Please stand as you are able.

Following the first hymn you may be seated. Please remain seated for the readings. Stand, as you are able, to sing.

Hymn H - 56 *O come, O come, Emmanuel* (Stanzas 1 & 2)

A Reading from the Book of Genesis. (3:1-15)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."

He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate."

The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

Hymn H - 60 *Creator of the stars of night*

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah. (40:1-11)

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." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Hymn H - 67 *Comfort, comfort ye my people*

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah. (35:1-10)

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Hymn H - 81 *Lo, how a rose e'er blooming*

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah. (7:10-15)

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

Hymn H - 79 *O little town of Bethlehem*

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke. (1:39-46)

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Hymn H - 93 *Angels, from the realms of glory* (Stanzas 1 & 4)

*The Choir processes out during the last hymn.
A brief interlude will follow; you are encouraged to observe silence in the Sanctuary.*

