



Fourth Sunday of Advent  
December 21, 2025



*The rose on the altar is in celebration of the birth of Veda Lea Jackson,  
daughter of Kelly and Cody Jackson, born on December 3rd at 1:13 pm, weighing 7 pounds, 9 ounces.  
Veda is welcomed with love by her big brother, Elijah and big sister, Eleanor.*

ST. JOHN'S CLERGY & STAFF

---

The Rev. Ripp Hardaway, Rector  
The Rev. Matthew Bloss, Associate Priest  
Riva Heron, Seminarian  
Jenny Montgomery, Executive Assistant to the Rector  
Desiree Moultrie, Director of Finance and Operations  
Grace Symmons, Director of Communications  
Ben Sykora, AV Tech Lead

Valerie Thompson, Director of Music & Organist  
Kelly Jackson, Director of Family Ministry & Parish Life  
Marjorie Nolan, Director of Children's Ministry & Events  
Lauren Koops, Assistant Youth Minister  
Emily Lehmuth, Director of Nursery Care  
Art Gonzalez, Sexton  
James Bangert, Assistant Sexton

WORSHIP MINISTERS

---

8:45 a.m.  
Acolytes Peter & Jane Jewell, Alice Jewell  
Altar Guild Ann Amoroso, Laurianne Rodriguez  
Greeters Glenn Ross, Sarah Reeves  
Lay Readers Clark Hendley, Lynn Campaigne  
Ushers Clarke Wendel, Sandy Payson  
Children's Chapel Emily Lehmuth

11 a.m.  
Luke, Ellie, and Tyler Francis  
Denise Marshall, Noelle Rodgers, Rachel Brown  
Marjaana & Dave Cich  
David Simmons, Paul Anthony  
Eric Francis, Kathy Simmons  
Emily Lehmuth

PRELUDE | Prelude on *Picardy* (Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence) – Robert J. Powell  
Meditation on *Picardy* (Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence) – Leo Sowerby

OPENING HYMN | Praise We the Lord This Day

Hymn 267

OPENING ACCLAMATION

BCP p. 355

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

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

ADVENT IV WREATH LIGHTING: LOVE

*Together* Lord God, as we near the end of the holy season of Advent, keep our hearts and minds ever-fixed on the love which defines your relationship to us. With each passing day help us to be more aware of the love you continually pour into us, so that we might love you and the rest of your creation all the more. If your church is to be known for any one thing, O Lord, let it be known for love.

*Celebrant* We light this candle for the sake of love. For the Love that created us. For the love that sustains us. For the love that will make this world whole again. Let all that we do in this life be inspired, tempered, and beholden-to that great love by which all thought, and action, is rightly ordered. **Amen.**

COLLECT FOR PURITY

BCP p. 355

*Together* 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.**

CHILDREN'S CHAPEL

*Children, preschool through 3rd grade, are invited to follow the Child Crucifer to Children's Chapel during the Song of Praise.*

SONG OF PRAISE | Prepare the Way, O Zion (v 1 & 3)

Hymn 65

COLLECT

BCP p. 212

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

FIRST LESSON | Isaiah 7:10-16

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. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

*Reader* The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 80:1-7, 16-18 | *responsively by half verse*

BCP p 702

1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; \*  
**shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.**

2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, \*  
**stir up your strength and come to help us.**

3 Restore us, O God of hosts; \*

**show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

4 O Lord God of hosts, \*

**how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?**

5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; \*

**you have given them bowls of tears to drink.**

6 You have made us the derision of our neighbors, \*

**and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

7 Restore us, O God of hosts; \*

**show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, \*

**the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.**

17 And so will we never turn away from you; \*

**give us life, that we may call upon your Name.**

18 Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; \*

**show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

## SECOND LESSON | Romans 1:1-7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Reader* The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL HYMN | The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came (v 1-2)

Hymn 265

## THE HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 1:18-25

*Celebrant* The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

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

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

*Celebrant* The Gospel of the Lord.

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

## THE SERMON

The Rev. Ripp Hardaway

## THE NICENE CREED

BCP p. 358

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.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE | Adapted by Fr. Matthew Bloss from The Song of Mary

*The Leader and People pray responsively.*

Almighty and Eternal God, throughout all the ages you have done great and wonderful things for your people. Help us, we pray, to recall the multitude of blessings you have poured out upon us and rouse your church to heed the Holy Spirit's call. That all bishops, priests, ministers, and all Christian people might conform to your will and join in the blessed work of making our world whole again.

The Almighty has done great things for us; **and holy is his Name.**

By your hand, and none other, you have created the whole of the universe. Assist us, we pray, in adoring and stewarding all the gifts of your creation. Let us never boast over the dominion you have granted to humankind over our fellow created beings. Let us love and serve creation, as you have loved and served us.

He has shown the strength of his arm; **and scattered the proud in their conceit.**

To your judgment, are all the rulers and thrones of this world held to account. Inspire and subdue the hearts of all those who help to govern our cities, our state, and our nation. We pray that the politicians and administrators of our land would not lord their authority over us, but offer diligent and humble service toward the betterment of all.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones; **and has lifted up the lowly.**

The pages of scripture testify that you are always ready to come to the help of your people. We pray that your love for the poor, the sorrowful, the sick, and the outcast would serve as a constant model for us. Help us to persist in our prayers for all those in need, that through your great power, all people might find deliverance from their fear and pain.

He has filled the hungry with good things; **and the rich he has sent away empty.**

Lord, your mercy endures forever, and not even the grave is a barrier to your love and redeeming power. In that truth, we pray to you for you all those whom we love, but see no longer. Guard and defend the souls of all the departed, and let them rest in peace.

The promise he made to our fathers, **to Abraham and his children forever.**

## THE CONFESSION OF SIN

BCP p. 360

*Celebrant* Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Silence may be kept.*

*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.**

*Celebrant* 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.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### OFFERTORY SENTENCE

BCP p. 377

*Celebrant* O Lord our God, you are worthy to receive glory and honor and power; because you have created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being. *Revelation 4:11*

OFFERTORY | Carol of the Bells - arr. Jason Krug

Handbell Choir

ADVENT DOXOLOGY | tune: *Veni Emmanuel*

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;*

*Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Eucharistic Prayer A; BCP p. 361

*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 God 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.

Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

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 numbers beginning with an S indicate Service Music, found at the front of The Hymnal 1982*

<i>Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,</i>	<i>Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.</i>
<i>Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,</i>	<i>Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.</i>
<i>Heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.</i>	<i>Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.</i>

*(The people stand or kneel.)*

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.**

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 pray:

**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 forever and ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD



FRACTION ANTHEM | Jesus, Lamb of God (from *Deutsche Messe* by Schubert, arr. Proulx)

Hymn S 164

*\*Hymn numbers beginning with an S indicate Service Music, found at the front of The Hymnal 1982.*

*Jesus, Lamb of God: have mercy on us.*

*Jesus, bearer of our sins: have mercy on us.*

*Jesus, redeemer, redeemer of the world:*

*Give us your peace, give us your peace.*

THE INVITATION

*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.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

BCP p. 365

*During communion, prayer teams are available to pray with you in the alcoves on either side of the altar.*

COMMUNION MUSIC

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear – arr. Barbara B. Kinyon

Handbell Choir

Of the Father's Love Begotten – arr. John Carter

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

BCP p. 366

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.

SENDING FORTH EUCHARISTIC VISITOR(S)

*Celebrant* In the name of this congregation, we send you forth bearing these holy gifts, that [*N.* and] all those to whom you go may share with us in the communion of Christ's body and blood.

*All* We who are many are one body, because we all share one bread, one cup.

THE BLESSING

May Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, scatter the darkness from before your path, and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN | Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Hymn 324

THE DISMISSAL

BCP p. 366

*Celebrant* Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

*People* Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE | Gloria! (tunes: *Les Anges Dans Nos Campagnes*; *Branle de l'Officiel*) – Gilbert M. Martin

Valerie Thompson, Organist

*Special THANKS to our Handbell Choir for providing beautiful music today.*

*Fall 2025 Handbell Choir members are: Anne Denison, Jim Farrell, Denise Marshall, Eric Marshall, Susan Morgan, Atlas Thompson, Vickie Varteressian, Paula Warren, Rick Warren, Bethany Wolf, and Donna Woolverton.*

*Contact Valerie (valerie@stjohnsnb.com) if you're interested in joining this choir!*



### End of Year Giving Reminder

All 2025 contributions must be received or postmarked by December 31, 2025. Contribution statements will be emailed by January 15, 2026. To request a printed statement, call Desiree at (830) 625-2532. If you itemize deductions, please wait to file your tax return until you receive your statement.

### Budget Committee Update

The 2026 Budget Committee—John Howe, Dan Geisler, Joe Abell, Lyn Enright, and Sarah Reeves—has finalized next year's recommended budget to present to the Vestry. Please contact any member with questions.

### 2025 Year-End Ministry Reports

All ministry leaders are asked to submit their 2025 Year-End Ministry Report to Jenny ([jenny@stjohnsnb.com](mailto:jenny@stjohnsnb.com)) by Monday, December 29. These reports will be shared at the Annual Parish Meeting on Sunday, January 18, 2026.

### First Footing Christmas Bags

Thanks to your generosity, we delivered 50 Thanksgiving bags to First Footing! We're doing it again for Christmas and only need \$10 gift cards to McDonald's, Bill Miller, and Whataburger to complete the bags. Please drop cards at the office or in the offering plate.

### Advent Journey - Self-guided Art Walk | *Guide available at [stjohnsnb.com/AdventJourney](http://stjohnsnb.com/AdventJourney)*

Experience the Advent Journey in the Sanctuary yard and foyer. The artwork inspired by Luke 1–2 that traces the story of Christ's coming. Move from painting to painting, reflect on the scripture, and behold the wonder of the season.

### Watch Party: Capital Campaign Introduction Video | TODAY at 10 a.m. in the Conference Room

### "The Mystery of Christmas" Godly Play with Emily and Fr. Ripp | TODAY at 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Designed for children of all ages and meaningful for adults, too. Hospitality provided after the lesson.

**Church Office Holiday Closures:** December 23 at noon - December 26 and December 30 at noon - January 2.

### Christmas Eve Services | Wednesday, December 24 | 4 p.m. (Family), 7 p.m. (Traditional), 10:30 p.m. (Traditional)

Our family service is often very full. To help make room for visiting families and little ones, *we invite those without children to consider attending one of our later services*. This year we're also offering a new 10:30 p.m. service, ending just as Christmas Day begins—a beautiful way to behold the wonder of the Nativity.

### Christmas Day Service with Fr. Ripp | Thursday, December 25 at 8:45 a.m.

**Baptism Sunday | Sunday, January 4** Email Jenny ([jenny@stjohnsnb.com](mailto:jenny@stjohnsnb.com)) if you are interested in being baptized.

### Communion Class with Fr. Ripp | Sunday, January 4 at 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary | Hospitality provided afterwards

The history, significance, and importance of communion will be taught and discussed. Parents are welcome to attend as well. Contact Marjorie Nolan, Director of Children's Ministry & Special Events, with any questions.

### Newcomers' Dinner | January 25 from 4:30 - 7 p.m. *Please RSVP in the Church Center app.*

Our Newcomers Dinners are for anyone who is new (or feeling new!) to St. John's. Dinner is provided and the whole family is invited! January's dinner will be hosted at the home of Vicky & Dan Geisler.

### Mustang Island Family Camp | Session 9 with Fr. Matthew | July 23–26

Join Fr. Matthew and other St. John's families for a long weekend of sun, sand, worship, and rest. Enjoy chapel, beach time, crafts, and time together on the coast. **Register TODAY - spots fill quickly!**

### Journey to the Holy Land | December 27, 2026 - January 7, 2027

Join Fr. Ripp and Rev. Ben Nelson on a pilgrimage through the Holy Land, ending with the Orthodox celebration of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem on January 6. To learn more or reserve your place, email Fr. Ripp at [ripp@stjohnsnb.com](mailto:ripp@stjohnsnb.com).