

Saint Michael Cathedral A BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Sunday, December 8, 2024 at 5:00 P.M.

"To be a guiding light of Christ's grace, justice, freedom and love"

The Cathedral Church of Saint Michael and All Angels The Diocese of Barbados

Diocesan Bishop

The Rt. Rev'd Michael B. St. John Maxwell, M. A.

Dean
The Very Rev'd Dr. Jeffrey D. Gibson

Precentor

The Rev'd Canon George Knight, B.Min.

Assistant Priest
The Rev'd Stephanie-Ann Wedderburn, B.Sc., B.A.

Organist/Choirmaster
Mr. John F. Bryan, B.Sc., BMus.

Organist
Mr. Eric Cobham, B.Sc., BMus.

Administrative Assistant Ms. Arlene Miller

Verger
Mrs. Chloe Grant

A Celebration of the Holy Eucharist President and Preacher: The Very Rev'd Dr. Jeffrey D. Gibson

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Entrance in Silence

The Greeting

Priest:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People:

And also with you.

Words of Welcome

The Opening Hymn ~ 41

Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding; 'Christ is nigh', it seems to say; 'Cast away the dreams of darkness, O ye children of the day!'

Wakened by the solemn warning, let the earth-bound soul arise; Christ, her Sun, all ill dispelling, shines upon the morning skies.

Lo, the Lamb, so long expected,

comes with pardon down from heaven; let us haste, with tears of sorrow, one and all to be forgiven;

That when next he comes with glory, and the world is wrapped in fear, with his mercy he may shield us, and with words of love draw near.

Honour, glory, might, and blessing to the Father and the Son, with the everlasting Spirit, while eternal ages run.

> Words: anonymous, from Vox clara ecce intronat, 6th century, Latin; translation: Edward Caswall (1814-1878)

Lighting of the Advent Candles

The Lighters of the Candles:

- 1. Hope ~
- 2. Peace ~
- 3. Joy ~
- 4. Love ~
- 5. The Christ Candle ~ The Dean

(Each response is followed by a period of silence for personal remembrance and prayer)

Priest:

We light this first candle, the candle of **HOPE**, recalling the pain of loss; the loss of jobs, the loss of health; the loss of relationships. We pause to gather up the pain of the past and

offer it to God. As we light this candle, may it remind us of the hope that light brings into darkness and the Christian hope of the resurrection to eternal life. The psalmist says "O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem." As we think of this blessed hope, may we each strive to carry the light of Christ into the world through our daily lives.

People:

As that same hope burns within us, may our loving God refresh, restore, renew us, and lead us into your future. Silence

Priest:

We light this second candle, the candle of **PEACE**, as we remember those whom we have loved and lost. We remember their names, their faces, their voices, the memories that bind them to us in this season. Lord, they are now at peace with you. The light of this candle reminds us of our Lord's promise of the gift of peace to His disciples. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (John 14:27). May His promise to them be ours as well.

People:

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

Silence

Priest:

We light this third candle, the candle of **JOY**, as we remember ourselves and our sorrow in this season of joy. We recall these past weeks and months; the disbelief, the anger, the sadness, and give thanks to God for the support of family and friends and all who have stood with us. This candle reminds us of the joy of which the prophet Isaiah spoke to a people in despair. **"Be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight."** (Isaiah 65:18).

People:

The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Silence

Priest:

We light this fourth candle, the candle of **LOVE**, to remember the love we shared with our loved ones and our faith and the gift of love which the Christmas story offers to us in Jesus. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises to love us always, for He is our loving Shepherd in whom we shall never lack anything.

People:

He says to us that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Silence

Priest:

We now light our last candle, the **CHRIST CANDLE**, to remember the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As the prophets promised so long ago, you have come to us once again; and with the shepherds, we are filled with wonder and amazement. Lord, you come as a tiny, fragile baby; yet we know that you are God and you are with us. May the flame of this candle remind us that you are the light of the world and that if we follow you, we will never walk in darkness, but will have the true light of life.

All:

Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

The Collect

The President:

Let us pray.

God our Comforter, in this Holy Season we are invited to receive good news of joy because people who once walked in darkness have seen a great light. May we who have suffered loss in our lives once again experience joy and see your light. May the light that is the Holy Child of Bethlehem illumine our hearts; through Him who is Christ our Lord.

People: Amen

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 40:1, 25-30 "God's People are Comforted"

Lector:

READER:

A Reading from the Word of God, written in the Book of Isaiah, the fortieth chapter, beginning at the first verse.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high and see:

Who created these?

He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name;

because he is great in strength,

mighty in power,

not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob,

and speak, O Israel,

'My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God'?

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God,

the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary;

his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint,

and strengthens the powerless.

Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,

they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

READER: The Word of the Lord

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 121 Levavi oculos

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- 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills;* from where is my help to come?
- 2 My help comes from the LORD,* the maker of heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not let your foot be moved* and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.
- 4 Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel* shall neither slumber nor sleep;
- 5 The LORD himself watches over you;* the LORD is your shade at your right hand,
- 6 So that the sun shall not strike you by day,* nor the moon by night.
- 7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil;* it is he who shall keep you safe.
- 8 The LORD shall watch over your going out and your coming in,*
 from this time forth for evermore.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forever. *Amen*.

New Testament Lesson: 1 Peter 1:3-9

"A Living Hope"

Lector:

READER:

A Reading from the Word of God, written in the First Letter of Peter, the first chapter, beginning at the third verse.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

READER: The Word of the Lord

ALL: Thanks be to God.

The Gradual **Hymn** ~ 511

Blest are the pure in heart, for they shall see our God; the secret of the Lord is theirs, their soul is Christ's abode.

The Lord, who left the heavens our life and peace to bring, to dwell in lowliness with men, their pattern and their King.

Still to the lowly soul he doth himself impart, and for his dwelling and his throne chooseth the pure in heart.

Lord, we thy presence seek; may ours this blessing be; give us a pure and lowly heart, a temple meet for thee.

Words: John Keble (1792-1866), with others

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 5:3-12 "The Beatitudes"

READER: The Lord be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

GOSPELLER:

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the fifth chapter, beginning at the third verse.

ALL: Glory to Christ our Saviour

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

GOSPELLER: This is the Gospel of Christ. **ALL:** Praise to Christ our Lord.

A Reflection -

Silence

LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE AND HOPE

LITANIST:

Leader:

In the spirit of this season we approach the God of all hope and grace praying. "Hear our prayer."

Leader:

For the peace proclaimed by the Christmas angels, to come throughout the whole world; God of hope,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader:

For all in our world who know pain and loneliness as a constant companion, and for those who live without hope, that they may hear and receive the glad tidings of your love for them; God of hope,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader:

For our family and friends, and all who share our pain and grief, that they may know your peace and love; God of hope,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader:

For ourselves, that we do not try to minimize our loss during this time but that in our vulnerability we might meet you, who came to us as a vulnerable child; God of hope,

People: Hear our prayer

Leader:

For things done and left undone, that we might be forgiven and restored; God of hope,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader:

For every loss and grief we bear; for those we love but see no longer, that nothing good in their lives would be lost but will be of much value to the world; God of hope,

People: Hear our prayer.

In silence or out loud we remember our loved ones who have gone before us.

Leader:

Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord

People: And let light perpetual shine upon them.

Leader:

May the souls of the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace and rise in glory.

THE ACT OF PENITENCE

THE PRESIDENT:

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8, 9)

(A period of silence shall be kept)

THE PRESIDENT:

Let us therefore confess our sins.

ALL:

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 neighbours as ourselves; we have not loved ourselves as we ought. 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 ABSOLUTION

PRESIDENT:

Almighty God, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

(Please stand)

THE GREETING OF THE PEACE

PRESIDENT:

The Kingdom of God is justice, peace, and joy, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

ALL:

They who thus serve Christ are acceptable to God and approved by others.

PRESIDENT:

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

ALL: And also with you.

HYMN OF FELLOWSHIP: "Let there be peace on earth"

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me
Let there be peace on earth
The peace that was meant to be
With God our Creator
Children all are we
Let us walk with each other
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me
Let this be the moment now
With every step I take
Let this be my solemn vow
To take each moment
And live each moment
In peace eternally
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.

TRIMMING THE CHRISTMAS TREE (A Tree of Hope)

The Blessing of the Doves

As the altar is being set, we invite you to come forward to hang a white dove on the Christmas tree in memory of those you love but see no longer.

Organ Interlude

THE MINISTRY OF THE SACRAMENT

The Offertory Hymn ~ 462

Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you; beneath his wings of love abide, God will take care of you.

Refrain:

God will take care of you, through every day, o'er all the way; he will take care of you, God will take care of you.

Through days of toil when heart doth fail, God will take care of you; when dangers fierce your path assail, God will take care of you.

Refrain

All you may need he will provide, God will take care of you; nothing you ask will be denied,

God will take care of you.

Refrain

No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you; lean, weary one, upon his breast, God will take care of you.

Refrain

Words: Civilla Durfee Martin (1869-1948)

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER "B"

PRESIDENT AND PEOPLE:

Father, we offer you these gifts which you have given us: this bread, this wine, this money. With them we offer ourselves, our lives, and our work, to become through your Holy Spirit a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice. As this bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, so may we and all your people become channels of your love; through the same Christ our Lord. *Amen*.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

PRESIDENT: The Lord be with you. **ALL:** And also with you.

PRESIDENT: Lift up your hearts.

ALL: We lift them up to the Lord.

PRESIDENT: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

ALL: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

PRESIDENT:

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Father almighty, everlasting God:

Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in Him of eternal 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 forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

ALL:

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

(Please sit or kneel)

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING "C"

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PRESIDENT:

We give thanks to you, Lord our God,

for the goodness and love you have made known to us in creation; in calling Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and, above all, in the Word made flesh, Jesus your Son. For in these last days you sent Him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. In Him, you have delivered us from evil. and made us worthy to stand before you, In Him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life. For, on the night that He was betrayed He took bread, and when He had given thanks to you, He broke it and gave it to His disciples and said: "Take this, and eat it: This is my Body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And 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."

PRESIDENT:

Therefore, Father, according to His command:

ALL:

We remember His death; We proclaim His resurrection; We await His coming in glory.

PRESIDENT:

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the sacrament of the Body of Christ and His Blood of the New Covenant. Unite us to your Son in His sacrifice that we, made acceptable in Him, may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time, reconcile all things in Christ, and make them new, and bring us to that city of light where you dwell with all your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation:

By whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, Almighty Father, now and ever.

ALL:

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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PRESIDENT:

As our Saviour has taught us, so we pray:

ALL:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name;
your kingdom come; your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread,
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

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PRESIDENT:

This is the true bread which comes from heaven

ALL:

Whoever eats this bread will live forever.

THE COMMUNION Form "C"

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The Invitation

PRESIDENT:

Draw near and receive the Body and Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ with faith and thanksgiving.

ALL:

We do not presume to come to this your table, most merciful Father, trusting in our own righteousness, but only in your boundless mercy. We are not even worthy to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the Lord ever the same, ever merciful. Grant therefore, Lord of grace and love, that we may so eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ and drink His blood, that with bodies and souls made clean from every stain of sin we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us. Amen.

THE AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: grant us peace.



The Administration of Communion/Spiritual Communion

The Communion **Hymn** ~ 595

I am the bread of life; they who come to me shall not hunger; they who believe in me shall not thirst. No one come to me unless the Father draw them.

Refrain:

And I will raise them up, and I will raise them up, and I will raise them up on the last day.

The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world, and they who eat of this bread, they shall live for ever.

Refrain

Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink of his blood, you shall not have life within you, you shall not have life within you.

Refrain

I am the resurrection, I am the life; they who believe in me, even if they die, they shall live for ever.

Refrain

Yes, Lord we believe

that you are the Christ, the Son of God who has come into the world. **Refrain**

Words: Suzanne Toolan (1927-), Adaptation of John 6. Words © 1966, 1970, 1971, 1975 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Uded by permission

THE POST COMMUNION PRAYER

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ALL:

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 Saviour 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 honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

THE BLESSING "Advent"

The Son of Righteousness shine upon you, gladden your hearts, and scatter the darkness from before you; and the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

ALL: Amen.

The Recessional Hymn ~ 507

Thou didst leave thy throne and thy kingly crown when thou camest to earth for me; but in Bethlehem's home was there found no room for thy holy Nativity:

Refrain:

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus; there is room in my heart for thee.

Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang, proclaiming thy royal degree; but in lowly birth didst thou come to earth, and in great humility:

Refrain:

The foxes found rest, and the bird had its nest in the shade of the cedar tree; but thy couch was the sod, O thou Son of God, in the desert of Galilee:

Refrain:

Thou camest, O Lord, with the living word that should set thy people free; but with mocking scorn and with crown of thorn they bore thee to Calvary:

Refrain:

When the heavens shall ring, and the angels sing, at thy coming to victory, let thy voice call me home, saying, 'Yet there is room,

there is room at my side for thee:'

Refrain:

Words: Emily Elizabeth Steele Elliot (1836-1897)

THE DISMISSAL

THE PRESIDENT: The Lord be with you

ALL: And also with you.

THE PRESIDENT: Go in peace and serve the Lord.

ALL: In the name of Christ. Amen

Organ Postlude

Thank you most sincerely for worshipping at the Cathedral this evening. It is hoped that this service of comfort has helped to recognize the depth of the season and to process those negative feelings that might be held within during this holiday season.

CATHEDRAL NEWS

GIFT MONTH: In recent years the month of November has been observed as Gift Month. Members, well-wishers and friends are asked to make a donation to the ministry, mission and maintenance of the Cathedral. Envelopes are available to facilitate this contribution. As the Anglican Church in Barbados prepares to celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2024, so too will the St. Michael Parish Church celebrate the 200th anniversary of its designation as the Cathedral of the Diocese.

Gifts in celebration of this significant milestone would be greatly appreciated.

BEREAVEMENT: We extend sincere condolences to the families of the late:

- Mrs. Clarissa Carrington (Shut-in)
- Mrs. Celia Gill (New York)
- Mrs. Hazel Norville (St. George Parish Church)

May the deceased rest in peace. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)

NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS: The Cathedral will present the Annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, next Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 8:00 P.M. Tickets are available from members and at the Cathedral's Office at \$30.00 each. Everyone's support is needed to make this a financially successful event.

FLOWERS: As usual, there will be no floral arrangements during the Advent season; however, members are encouraged to make donations for the supply of flowers for Christmas. Contributions may be made in celebration of a personal event, in commemoration of a departed loved one, or to mark any other occasion in the life of a family. Thanks for your consideration.

PINK APPAREL: The Dean has kindly asked that you wear pink on the third Sunday of Advent which represents JOY.

OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Church Warden Emeritus:

Mr. Arlington DaCosta Watson, BSM, J.P.

Church Wardens:

Mr. Samuel Maxwell, J.P., Mr. Victor Sylvester

Secretary: Ms. Donnah Russell, J.P.

Assistant Secretary: Mrs. Juno Burrows

Treasurer: Mr. David Murray

Assistant Treasurer: Ms. Harriet Clarke

Synod Representatives:

Mr. Darwin Clarke

Mr. Samuel Maxwell, J.P.

Dr. Wendy Sealy

Alternative Synod Representative:

Ms. Donna Inniss

LEADERS OF ORGANISATIONS AND MINISTRIES

Men's Fellowship: Mr. John Moore

Mothers' Union: Mrs. Colleen Byer

Church Army: Captain Donnah Russell, J.P.

Woman's Auxiliary: Vacant

Ushers Guild: Mrs. Juno Burrows

Outreach Committee: Mrs. Delores Hinds

Guild of Servers: Mr. Jerry Alleyne

Health Ministry: Dr. Wendy Sealy

Sunday School: Mrs. Harriett Blackman

Flower Guild: Mrs. Shirley Hurley

Guild of St. Raphael: Mr. Darwin Clarke

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all Emily Dickinson



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