



*"Our mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ's love to our entire community through traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, fellowship, outreach, and Christian formation."*

**Our Vision:** *"We strive to be a haven of healing, reconciliation, joy and peace in service to our wider community and beyond, so that our example in prayer and practice may reflect Christ's love for us all."*

## THIS SUNDAY – DECEMBER 28TH, 2025 TO BECOME AS HE IS

### God Himself Has Arrived

*The following is an article from December 14, 2025, originally written by Fr. Will Brown, rector of All Saints', Thomasville, for the Living Church/"The Living Word".*

A very Merry Christmas to everyone. I hope everyone took a copy of the little booklet containing the great O Antiphons, short prayers which Christians traditionally recited daily beginning on December 17 and ending the day before Christmas. They are, as the introduction to the booklet says, very ancient prayers, and very beautiful. The introduction also mentions that – by a propitious coincidence, or by divine providence, or perhaps by the artifice of the anonymous author of these prayers – if you take the first letter of the Latin word for the messianic title in each antiphon, and you write them out in reverse order, they spell out the short Latin sentence: "Ero cras," which means, "tomorrow I come."

The antiphon for Christmas Eve, not a part of the sequence of the "Great O Antiphons," is nevertheless extremely beautiful, and each year on this evening I find myself very moved by it: "Or ever the sun is risen in the heavens, you shall see the King of kings proceeding from the Father, As a bridegroom out of his chamber."

This night is a very holy night, the commemoration by the disciples of Jesus of an event lying mystically at the very center of the universe, the very center of history, made holy-beyond-telling by the coming of the transcendent, eternal and uncreated God into the middle of his creation, into the middle of human history. This is the night that changed everything for the whole universe, like a nuclear bomb buried in the earth. On this night the indissoluble union of God with his creation, a union that had been hidden inside the womb of the Virgin Mary for nine months, on this night it was made visible, dawning over the horizon of God's transcendence and man's expectation, "to shine on those who [dwelt] in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace."



We were in trouble, on a trajectory that led to death and total destruction, helpless against the onslaught of the powers of darkness and death arrayed against us, collectively and individually. No one has expressed mankind's desperation, to my mind, better than WH Auden in his "Christmas Oratorio," which I quote almost every year:

*The Pilgrim Way has led to the Abyss.*

*Was it to meet such grinning evidence*

*We left our richly odoured ignorance?*

*Was the triumphant answer to be this?*

*The Pilgrim Way has led to the Abyss.*

*We who must die demand a miracle.*

*How could the Eternal do a temporal act,*

*The Infinite become a finite fact?*

*Nothing can save us that is possible:*

*We who must die demand a miracle.*

A far cry from Jingle-Bells and tinsel and the inflatable Santa Clauses that our culture thrusts upon our consciousness every year, beginning around the end of October. Advent is a really a time to remember the desperate straits into which humanity has steered, and her correlatively desperate need for a Savior.

But on this night we become aware, we remind ourselves, that God himself has arrived – not merely an emissary from the army of angels who, since the beginning of human history had been fighting valiantly on man's behalf, but who had nevertheless been losing ground against the determined onslaught of Satan's kingdom. On this night God himself has arrived to fight for us, and therefore the angels break forth into singing. Luke's Gospel says that when Jesus was born, "suddenly there was... a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!'" (Luke 2.13-14).

But as with so many of the mysteries of our faith, there is a disjunction in all of this. God himself has come among us! The angels break forth in a song of victory! The powers of death and hell are shaken! And what is it like? It is like a newborn, lying in the straw. Yet in truth, this is Emanuel: God with us. This is God's victory and our salvation.

We speak in lofty terms about the salvation of the world manifested at Christmas, but what difference does the mystery of the Nativity make for us as individuals? Or, in other words, how may we appropriate this mystery to ourselves? There has for a long time been a devotion to the infant Jesus among Catholics, and if you pay a visit to our crèche at the back of the church, you will find an instance of it with the devotions on the prie-dieu, but we might be apt to find it all kind of inexplicable or saccharine. So what does our devotion to the Lord's nativity and infancy really mean?

Expounding the French School of Catholic spirituality, Father Pierre Pourrat, suggests that we consider, in essence, what it meant for the eternal Word of God to become a newborn babe – that is, what humility and abnegation is demonstrated by God's Son in this most improbable of condescensions. And the magnitude of this humility is truly inconceivable. That is, as Jacques Derrida put it: "...this becoming... Nothing – that is what appears impossible, more than impossible [less than nothing, something other than something], the most impossible possible, more impossible than the impossible if the impossible is the simple negative modality of the possible," (Sauf le Nom). In the Christmas Crib, the eternal has become a finite fact.

But Father Pourrat (quoting M. de Renty) says:

“The infancy of our Lord is a state in which WE must die to all and in which the soul waits for and receives orders from God in faith, silence, and respect, in innocence, purity, and simplicity, and lives day by day in abandonment, looking in a manner neither before nor behind; but uniting with the holy Child Jesus who, dead to himself, receives every order from his Father.... We must... as it seems to me, follow these footprints of Jesus Christ our model by the grace of his infancy.

We must ask our Lord, at every time, but especially at Christmas time, ‘to fill us with the spirit of his holy Childhood.’ This is the spirit needed by the Christian. Did not the Saviour say: ‘[Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven]’? The virtues of the state of Christian infancy are, in fact, indispensable to those who wish to belong truly to God. It is first of all the renunciation of our own spirit and the total abandonment of self to Jesus in order to let ourselves be led by him, like a child who surrenders itself in all that concerns it to those who have charge of it. Furthermore, these virtues are those which call to mind the special characteristics of the child, complete indifference, simplicity, purity, sweetness, and meekness, and finally innocence.”

Therefore, with the Shepherds, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” But let us look upon it with the eyes of faith and devotion, asking the Lord to make us like his Mother in our love for him, and like himself in our willingness to become as he is, even in his holy infancy.

## READINGS FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY

Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3 + Psalm 147:1–7,13–21 + Galatians 3:23–25; 4:4–7  
+ John 1:1–18

# CALENDAR

Note: We worship in our historic church. The service will also be on Zoom. The service time is 10:00 AM. Tuesday Noon Mass is held in All Saints' St. Mary Chapel.

**SUNDAY     December 28th, 2025   The First Sunday after Christmas Day**  
**10:00 AM Mass in All Saints' Church**  
Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at [www.allsaintschurch.org](http://www.allsaintschurch.org)  
Recording of Mass available before noon at [www.allsaintschurch.org](http://www.allsaintschurch.org)

**Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children**  
Ages 5 - 12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00 AM - 10:45 AM

**Christian Formation for Adults (the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays)**  
Youth and adults around Noon after the Mass in the Library  
Recording of Mass available before noon at [www.allsaintschurch.org](http://www.allsaintschurch.org)

## OUR CORE VALUES:

- Welcoming strangers like old friends
- Embracing the Anglo-Catholic tradition
- Being dependable members of a caring community
- Respecting each other's differences
- Being faithful stewards of God's gift
- Remembering that God loves everyone unconditionally