



# The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist

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[www.st-john-aptos.org](http://www.st-john-aptos.org)



## Blue Christmas Service

December 20, 2023 7 p.m.

# Welcome to St. John's!

- **Restrooms** are located on both ends of the building.
- **For prayer requests, email [prayer@st-john-aptos.org](mailto:prayer@st-john-aptos.org)** (routes to a group of 40+ parishioners who will pray for your request immediately upon receipt of the message.)

## Christmas Service Times

Dec 24, Sun.	@ 9 a.m.	4th Advent Service, ( <i>one morning service</i> )
Dec 24, Sun.	@ 4 p.m.	Christmas Eve Family Service – Children's Christmas pageant
Dec 24, Sun.	@ 10 p.m.	Christmas Eve "Midnight" Service – with Chime choir, Voice choir & other special music.
Dec 25, Mon.	@ 11 a.m.	Christmas Day Service.
Dec 31, Sun.	@ 11 a.m.	Lessons & Carols, ( <i>single service</i> )

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# BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Welcome to this Blue Christmas Service, a time when we can, with others, acknowledge the “blue” feelings we may have this time of year. In these final days of Advent, we will wait and watch for new light and new birth. We pray that you will find hope and comfort in knowing that you are not alone.

## Opening Hymn: O Lord, Hear My Prayer

Taize #20

$\text{♩} = 72$

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 72. The score consists of two systems. The first system has two staves: a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The vocal line begins with the lyrics: "O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer. When I call an - swer me. O The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: All my hope comes from God. The". The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines. The second system also has two staves. The vocal line continues with: "Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and lis - ten to me. O Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: God, the well - spring of life. The". The piano accompaniment continues with similar harmonic support. Both systems end with a "fine" marking and a fermata over the final note.

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer. When I call an - swer me. O  
The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: All my hope comes from God. The

Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and lis - ten to me. O  
Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: God, the well - spring of life. The

*fine*

*fine*

## Words of Invitation

2 Corinthians 1:4-5

God consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ.

## Opening Prayer

*New Zealand Prayer Book, p. 183*

Be present, Spirit of God, within us, your dwelling place and home,  
that this house may be one where all darkness is penetrated by your light,  
all troubles calmed by your peace, all evil redeemed by your love,  
all pain transformed in your suffering, and all dying glorified in your risen life. Amen.

## Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7

*New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)*

Thus says the LORD,

he who created you, O Jacob,

he who formed you, O Israel:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,

and the flame shall not consume you.

For I am the LORD your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

I give Egypt as your ransom,

Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.

Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you,

I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life.

Do not fear, for I am with you;

I will bring your offspring from the east,

and from the west I will gather you;

I will say to the north, "Give them up,"

and to the south, "Do not withhold;

bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth-

everyone who is called by my name,

whom I created for my glory,

whom I formed and made."

*Lector*            The Word of the Lord.

*People*            Thanks be to God.

# Song: God to Enfold You

John L. Bell & Graham Maule

God to en - fold you, Christ to up - hold you, Spi - rit to keep you in hea - ven's sight; so may God grace you, heal and em - brace you, lead you through dark - ness in - to the light.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line with chords in the right hand. The lyrics are: "God to en - fold you, Christ to up - hold you, Spi - rit to keep you in hea - ven's sight; so may God grace you, heal and em - brace you, lead you through dark - ness in - to the light."

## Reading: Matthew 11:28-30

*New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)*

[Jesus said,] "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

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

## Litany for Comfort

*St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church, Eastpointe, MI*

*Intercessor* Compassionate God, you know our deepest longings and sorrows.

Hear our sorrow and let our cry come to you.

*People* **Stand near in the darkness, O God.**

We are broken by our loss and afraid of our future,  
overwhelmed by all we cannot understand.

**Stand near in the darkness, O God.**

We are heavy with sadness and grief, sick with despair, aching with emptiness;

**Stand near in the darkness, O God.**

We are confused and enraged at what feels unjust.

We are frightened to find ourselves doubting your love;

**Stand near in the darkness, O God.**

Turn your heart towards us, healing God.

We have lost our way and feel alone in our sorrow.

**Turn your heart towards us and let mercy flow.**

Help us to grieve honestly and bravely, allowing our tears to fall freely.

**Turn your heart towards us and let mercy flow.**

Teach us to trust you with all that we feel and for all that we need.

**Turn your heart towards us and let mercy flow.**

Release us from blame towards others or ourselves. Forgive us our failures at love.

**Turn your heart towards us and let mercy flow.**

Heal us of shame and guilt; save us from regret.

**Turn your heart towards us and let mercy flow.**

Give us grace to endure, and the courage of love in all that we do.

**Turn your heart towards us and let mercy flow.**

Save and restore us, Good Lord, by your love. Only you can heal us.

Send your life-giving Spirit to renew our broken hearts.

**Save and restore us, Good Lord, by your love.**

Increase our patience toward ourselves and each other.

**Save and restore us, Good Lord, by your love.**

Help us let go of lost dreams, and entrust ourselves to your purpose and will.

**Save and restore us, Good Lord, by your love.**

Use our sorrows to enlarge our compassion toward others and ourselves.

**Save and restore us, Good Lord, by your love.**

Release us from fear, renew us in love, and rekindle our hope.

**Save and restore us, Good Lord, by your love.**

Fill us with thanks for the good things we enjoy and help us to notice our blessings.

**Save and restore us, Good Lord, by your love.**

Help us remember, always, those who suffer in illness, war, poverty, or despair,  
and turn our hearts towards their relief.

**Save and restore us, Good Lord, by your love.**

Renew us this night, that we might live as your children in the strength of your love.

Gracious God, as a father has compassion on his children, as a mother carries and feeds her children, so do you have mercy on us, and carry us in our afflictions. We thank you for strengthening and renewing us in your love. We pray for grace to help you push back the darkness in our world, to help unfold your light, and to live with courage, kindness, and hope. Amen..

## Memorial Offerings & Candle Lighting

We invite you to light a candle with special intention: in memory of someone, or to offer a prayer for a particular thing.


### Music During the Candle Lighting:

**The Lord is My Light** (all are invited to join in)

*Taize #36*

Theme I

Calmly (♩ = 66)




The Lord is my light, my light and sal-va-tion: in God I trust, in God I trust. The

*fine*

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for Theme I. It is written on a single staff in G major (one flat) and common time. The tempo is marked 'Calmly' with a quarter note equal to 66 beats per minute. The melody consists of a series of quarter and eighth notes, with a repeat sign at the beginning. The lyrics are written below the staff, and the piece concludes with a 'fine' marking.

Theme II



The Lord is my light, my light and sal-va-tion: in God I trust, in God I trust. The

*fine*

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for Theme II. It is written on a single staff in G major (one flat) and common time. The melody is similar to Theme I but includes a chromatic movement in the final phrase. The lyrics are written below the staff, and the piece concludes with a 'fine' marking.

## A Time of Sharing

## Reading: For Grieving Hearts at Christmastime

By John Roedel (submitted by Amma Eliza Linley)

the wounds in our hearts  
seem to ache a little deeper  
during the holidays

don't feel like you  
need to cover your wounded  
heart in wrapping paper  
this Christmas

you don't have to  
tie the corners  
of your lips with  
garland to force  
a smile

you don't have to keep whistling  
"silent night" to keep  
people from noticing  
your bottom lip is trembling

you don't have to blame  
an allergy to nutmeg  
for why you are walking  
around with tears in your  
eyes

for this Christmas  
give yourself permission  
to feel whatever you  
need to

last night I was visited  
by the ghost  
of yuletide Heartbreak

she told me this:  
it's okay to not be okay  
on Christmas

it's okay to be melancholy  
under the mistletoe

it's okay to come apart  
while they are caroling

it's okay to trace your scars with your fingers  
while others are humming 'Holy Night'

it's okay to miss the presence of your beloved  
amid the sound of opening presents

it's okay, my love,  
to hurt during the holidays

don't stuff your stockings  
with your suffering

don't hide your healing  
during the holidays

give yourself the gift  
of being authentic to yourself

it's okay to not be okay  
during Christmas

it's okay to let the broken  
pieces inside of you  
be the only jingle bells you hear  
because, my love, because,

it means you are still fighting  
to stay alive  
and I can't think of anything  
more to celebrate than that



# Hymn: Precious Lord, Take My Hand

WLP #800

1. Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me  
 2. When my way grows drear, pre - cious Lord, lin - ger  
 3. When the dark - ness ap - pears and the night draws

stand, I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
 near, when my life is al - most gone;  
 near, and the day is past and gone;

— through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the  
 — hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand, lest I  
 — at the riv - er I stand, guide my feet, hold my

light, take my hand, pre-cious Lord, lead me on.  
 fall, take my hand, pre-cious Lord, lead me on.  
 hand, take my hand, pre-cious Lord, lead me on.

## Reading: John 16:20-22, 14:27

[Jesus said,] “Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy. When a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come. But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world. So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. ... 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.”

## The Blessing

*The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston*

Let love now be present  
in every corner of your life,  
in every room you enter,  
every street you walk.

Let it be beside you,  
around you,  
within you  
as you face what your life has to offer.

Remember that in your best times  
it was love that brought you the joy you have known,  
And in your worst times  
it was love that sustained your hope against all odds.

Rely on this love,  
draw deeply from its wells of strength,  
be filled with its possibilities.

Even if you imagine it to be only a spark amid the shadows,  
its light will never leave you.

Let love be present now,  
and discover who you truly are.

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

# Closing Hymn: We Shall Overcome

LEVAS #227

We shall o - ver - come, We shall o - ver - come,

We shall o - ver - come some - day; Oh,

deep in my heart, I do be - lieve, (Oh)

We shall o - ver - come some - day. day.

2. We'll walk hand in hand, today. 4. We are not afraid, today. 5. We shall live in peace, someday.

## The Dismissal

*Presider* Go in peace, knowing that the God whose love created this world sent Jesus into the same world to be our friend, companion, and Savior. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

*People* Thanks be to God.

## Serving Tonight

<i>Presider:</i>	The Rev. Eliza Linley
<i>Musician:</i>	Andrew Carter
<i>Lectors:</i>	TBD
<i>Intercessor:</i>	Sherrie DeWitt
<i>Usher:</i>	Sherrie DeWitt



## The Leadership of St. John's

Ministers: All of us!



### Clergy Staff

The Rev. Eliza Linley (“Amma Eliza”)  
Interim Pastor, [rector@st-john-aptos.org](mailto:rector@st-john-aptos.org)

**Lay Staff** [staff@st-john-aptos.org](mailto:staff@st-john-aptos.org)

**Chrys Sparks, Office Manager**

[admin@st-john-aptos.org](mailto:admin@st-john-aptos.org), (831) 708-6850 (cell)

**Andrew S. Carter, Director of Music Ministries**

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**Matt McCabe, Sexton**

[matt@st-john-aptos.org](mailto:matt@st-john-aptos.org), (831) 419-4998 (cell)

**Elizabeth Sanchez, Helpful Shop Manager**

[helpfulshop@st-john-aptos.org](mailto:helpfulshop@st-john-aptos.org), 831-295-1142 (cell)

**Rosa Miriam Escobar, Janitor**

**Lisa Freeman, Community Youth Prog. Director**

[community-youth@st-john-aptos.org](mailto:community-youth@st-john-aptos.org), 831-854-7265 (cell)

**Realm** (view directory & giving info, post messages to parishioners)

[www.onrealm.org](http://www.onrealm.org) (contact the office for a password)

**Assisting Clergy** [clergy@st-john-aptos.org](mailto:clergy@st-john-aptos.org)

The Rev. Mary Craig Caruthers (“Rev. Mary Craig”)

The Rev. John Duncan (“Father John”)

The Rev. Mary Lou McKenney (“Rev. Mary Lou”)

### Vestry (Governing Board)

To reach the entire vestry, email [vestry@st-john-aptos.org](mailto:vestry@st-john-aptos.org).

**Administration Team** [vestry-admin@st-john-aptos.org](mailto:vestry-admin@st-john-aptos.org)

Win Fernald, Senior Warden

Debra Spencer, Junior Warden

Alliee DeArmond, Clerk

Nelson Crandall, Treasurer

Jon Showalter

### Internal Ministry Support Team

[vestry-internal@st-john-aptos.org](mailto:vestry-internal@st-john-aptos.org)

Anne Baker, Liz Lindsley, Antonette Wood

### External Ministry Support Team

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Kathy Butler, Joanna Phillips, Susan von Schmacht