

# ST. MARY OF THE HILLS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

BLOWING ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA



DECEMBER 24, 2025  
THE EVE OF THE NATIVITY

10:00 PM

# WELCOME TO SAINT MARY OF THE HILLS!

Dear Friends,

Welcome! As we celebrate this Christmas, it is so very good that you are here to worship and adore the infant Christ, Immanuel, God among us.

From the ancient prophet, Isaiah, we read, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.” The prophet’s hope reaches across generations - from a people so long ago, eagerly longing to know the presence of the Almighty, to us here gathered to proclaim anew the Savior’s birth.

Light has come into the world, even as long shadows remain.

The great twentieth-century American theologian, Howard Thurman, penned these series of verses, naming all the shadowed places where the light of Christ, the light of Christmas

I will light candles this Christmas.  
Candles of joy, despite all the sadness.  
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch.  
Candles of courage where fear is ever present.  
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days.  
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens.  
Candles of love to inspire all of my living.  
Candles that will burn all the year long.

In the holy child, the babe of Bethlehem – Jesus born of Mary – the heavens burst forth with the light of life and the hope of our redemption is made new. The shadows of our old, broken and hurting world are lifted as the eternal takes on temporality, the infinite takes on finitude.

The mystery of Christmas is an ancient love story that never grows old, of God who cannot, does not, and will not remain at a distance. God has come near to us – then, now, and always.

Merry Christmas!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew +". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev'd Andrew J. Hege  
Rector

# A MUSICAL OFFERING FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

## 9:45 PM

Concerto grosso in G minor, Op. 6, No. 8 (*Christmas Concerto*)    Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)

### Ensemble

Nancy Bargerstock, violin I  
Maria Kindt, violin II  
Eric Koontz, viola  
Lee Richie, cello

## THE HOLY EUCHARIST

### 10:00 PM

### THE WORD OF GOD

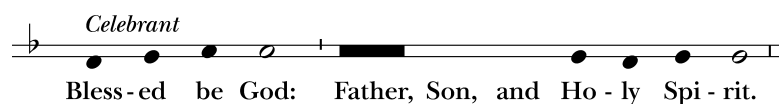
HYMN 83 (*omit vs. 4-5*)  
O come, all ye faithful

*Adeste Fideles*

THE OPENING ACCLAMATION & COLLECT FOR PURITY

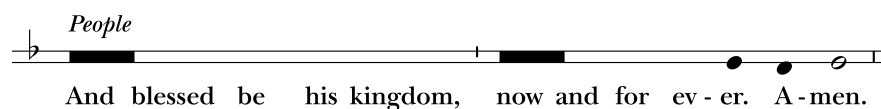
BCP 355

*Celebrant*



Bless-ed be God: Father, Son, and Ho-ly Spi-rit.

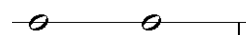
*People*



And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ev-er. A-men.

*The Celebrant prays,*

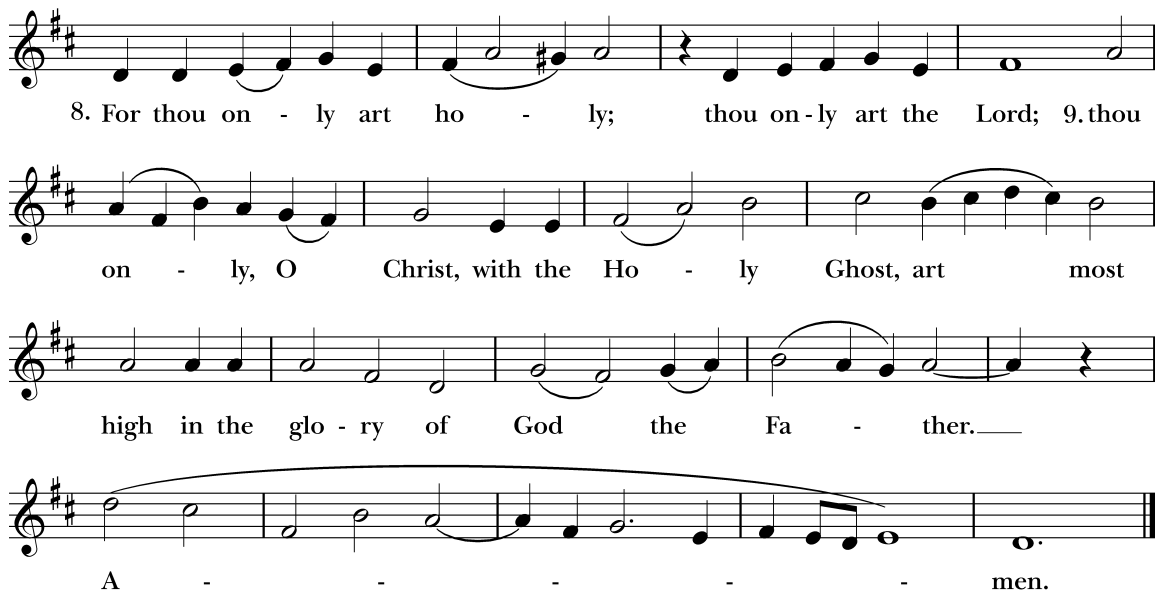
Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord.



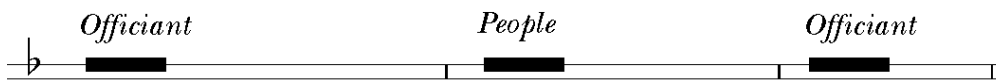
A - men.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

1. Glo - ry be to God on high, and on earth peace,  
good will towards men. 2. We praise thee, we bless thee,  
we wor - ship thee, we glo - ri - fy thee, we give  
thanks to thee for thy great glo - ry, 3. O Lord God, heaven - ly  
King, God the Fa-ther Al - might - y.  
4. O Lord, the on - ly be - got - ten Son, Je - sus Christ;  
5. O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Fa - ther, that  
ta - kest a - way the sins of the world, have mer - cy up -  
on us. 6. Thou that ta - kest a - way the sins of the  
world, re - ceive our prayer. 7. Thou that sit - test at the  
right hand of God the Fa - ther, have mer - cy up - on us.

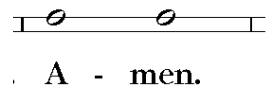


## THE COLLECT OF THE DAY



The Lord be with you. And also with you. 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.



## THE FIRST LESSON

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.

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

THE PSALM  
Chant: David Hurd

Psalm 96  
*Cantate Domino*

*The Choir sings the Psalm.*

- 1 Sing to the LORD a new song; \*  
sing to the LORD, all the whole earth.
- 2 Sing to the LORD and bless his Name; \*  
proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.
- 3 Declare his glory among 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 sanctuary!
- 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 into his courts.
- 9 Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; \*  
let the whole earth tremble before 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 SECOND LESSON

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.

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

## HYMN 94

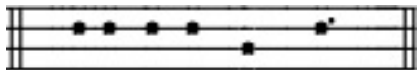
*Winchester Old*

While shepherds watched their flocks by night

## THE HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 2: 1-20

*Gospeler*        The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.



*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.

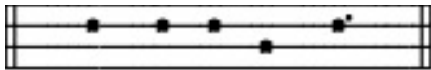
In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see-- I am bringing you good news of 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.

*Gospeler*      The Gospel of the Lord.



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

THE HOMILY

The Reverend Andrew J. Hege

*A few moments of silence for reflection follow the sermon.*

THE NICENE CREED

BCP 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.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*from Common Worship*

*The Leader and People pray responsively*

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

O God, in this holy night your Son our Saviour was born in human flesh.  
Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.  
Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

In this holy night there was no room for your Son in the inn.  
Protect with your love those who have no home and all who live in poverty.  
Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

In this holy night Mary, in the pain of labour, brought your Son to birth.  
Hold in your hand all who are in pain or distress.  
Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

In this holy night your Christ came as a light shining in the darkness.  
Bring comfort to all who suffer in the sadness of our world.  
Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

In this holy night the angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth.'  
Strengthen those who work for peace and justice in all the world.  
Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

In this holy night shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy.  
Give us grace to proclaim the gospel of Christ's redemption.

Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

In this holy night strangers found the Holy Family, and saw the baby lying in the manger.  
Bless our homes and all whom we love.

Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

In this holy night heaven is come down to earth, and earth is raised to heaven.  
Hold in your hand all those who have passed through death in the hope of your coming kingdom.

Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

In this holy night Christians the world over celebrate Christ's birth.  
Open our hearts that he may be born in us today.

Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

*After a period of silence, the Celebrant prays,*

Father, in this holy night angels and shepherds worshipped at the manger throne. Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Mary, Joseph and the saints through him who is your Word made flesh, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## THE PEACE

*Celebrant*

The peace of the Lord be al - ways with you.

*People*

And al - so with you.

*The Ministers and People exchange a sign of peace.*

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

# THE HOLY COMMUNION

## THE OFFERTORY

### ANTIPHON

*Laetentur Caeli*

Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad before the face of the Lord for he comes.

### MOTET—*Gaudete, Gaudete!*

Piae Cantiones, 1582

Rejoice, Rejoice! Christ is born of the virgin Mary, Rejoice!

It is now our desired time of grace;

Let us sing songs of joy, let us give devotion.

God was made man, nature marvels;

The world was renewed by Christ who is King.

The closed gate of Ezechiel has been passed through;

From where the light rises Salvation is found.

Therefore let our assembly now sing, sing the Psalms to purify us;

Let it praise the Lord: Greetings to our King!

### HYMN 105

*God Rest You Merry*

God rest you merry, gentlemen

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING, EUCHARISTIC PRAYER A

The musical notation consists of four staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff is for the Celebrant and the People, the second for the Celebrant and the People, the third for the Celebrant, and the fourth for the People. The lyrics are: The Lord be with you. And al - so with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give him thanks and praise.

*Celebrant*                      *People*  
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

*Celebrant*                      *People*  
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

*Celebrant*  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

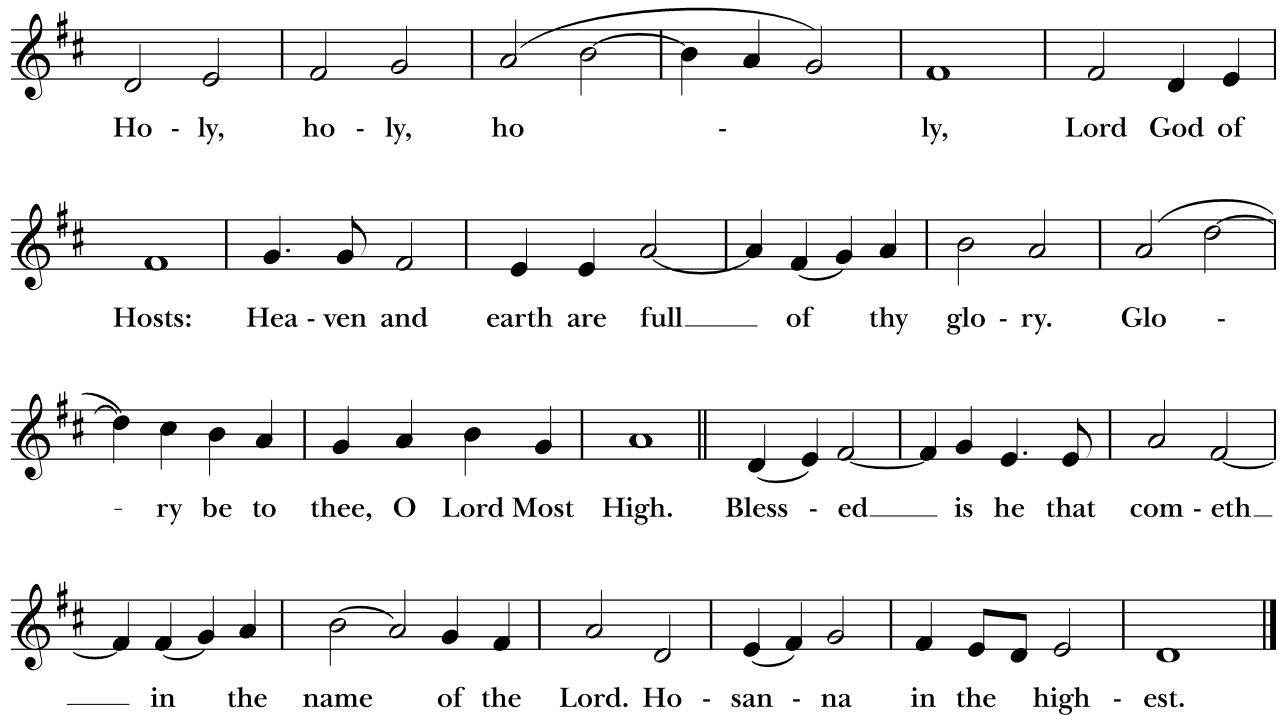
*People*  
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

*Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant continues the prayer and concludes the preface, singing,*

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and every-where 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:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Lord God of

Hosts: Hea - ven and earth are full of thy glo - ry. Glo -

- ry be to thee, O Lord Most High. Bless - ed is he that com - eth

in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*The Celebrant continues the prayer, recalling God's activity in our salvation history, the institution of the Lord's Supper, and inviting the people to join in saying,*

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

*Celebrant and People*

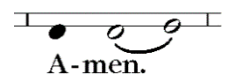
**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

*The Celebrant continues, invoking the Spirit's present work, concluding the prayer, and inviting the people to join in the doxology of the prayer, saying,*

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.



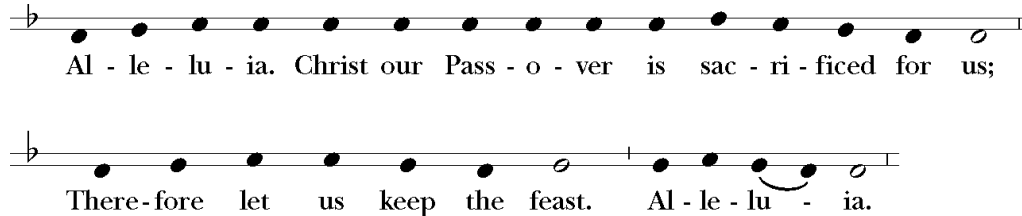
As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

**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 for ever. Amen.**

## FRACTION ANTHEM

S 152

*After breaking the consecrated bread, the Celebrant sings,*



## THE INVITATION TO COMMUNION

*Facing the people, the Celebrant says the following Invitation*

**The Gifts of God for the People of God.**

*and may add* Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

## MINISTRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*All baptized Christians, regardless of denomination, are welcome to receive Communion in the Episcopal Church. If you have not been baptized, we would love to talk to you about baptism. To receive the sacrament, extend your hands so that the priest may place the bread in the palm of your outstretched hands. Gluten free wafers are available. For those who desire to receive the wine that follows, guide the chalice toward your lips to drink from the cup. We kindly ask that you not intinct (dip) the bread into the chalice. If for any reason, you don't want to receive Communion, you are still invited to come forward, kneel, and cross your arms over your chest to signify this to the priest who will offer a blessing.*

MUSIC AT THE COMMUNION

*Pifa* from Messiah

G. F. Handel (1685-1759)

ANTIPHON

*In splendoribus*

Amidst the splendors of the heavenly sanctuary, from the womb,  
before the morning star, I have begotten you.

AGNUS DEI



O Lamb of God, that ta - kest a -

way the sins of the world, have mer - cy up -

on us. O Lamb of God, that

ta - kest a - way the sins of the world, have

mer - cy up - on us. O Lamb of

God, that ta - kest a - way the sins of the

world, grant us thy peace.

*In dulci jubilo* (In sweet joy) Let us our homage shew:  
 Our heart's joy reclineth *In praeseptio*; (In a manger;)   
 And like a bright star shineth *Matris in gremio*, (In the mother's lap,)   
*Alpha es et O!* (You are Alpha and Omega!)   
*O Jesu parvule*, (O tiny Jesus,) I yearn for thee alway!   
 Hear me, I beseech Thee, *O puer optime*; (O best of boys;)   
 My prayer let it reach Thee, *O princeps gloriae*. (O prince of glory.)   
*Trabe me post te*. (Draw me to you.)   
*O Patris caritas!* (O love of the Father!) *O Nati lenitas!* (O gentleness of the Begotten!)   
 Deeply were we stained *Per nostra crimina*: (Through our sins:)   
 But Thou for us hast gained *Coelorum gaudia*, (The joys of heaven,)   
*Qualis gloria!* (Such glory!)   
*Ubi sunt gaudia*, (Where are joys,) If that they be not there?   
 There are Angels singing *Nova cantica*; (New songs;)   
 And there the bells are ringing *In Regis curia*. (In the King's court.)   
 O that we were there!

HYMN 81

*Es ist ein Ros*

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming

THE POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER

BCP 365

**Eternal God, heavenly Father,**  
**you have graciously accepted us**  
**as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,**  
**and you have fed us with spiritual food**  
**in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.**  
**Send us now into the world in peace,**  
**and grant us strength and courage**  
**to love and serve you**  
**with gladness and singleness of heart;**  
**through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## 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 96

*Gloria*

Angels we have heard on high

## THE DISMISSAL

*Deacon*      *People*

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

## VOLUNTARY

*Allegro* from Exultate, jubilate, K. 165

W. A. Mozart (1756-1791), arr. Lynn Latham

The musical setting of the Ordinary of the Mass is  
*Missa Sancta Maria Magdalene* by Healey Willan (1880-1968).

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**St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church**

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[www.stmaryofthehills.org](http://www.stmaryofthehills.org)

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