Welcome to St. John’s Norwood!

At the heart of our church family is a desire to reflect God’s love and gracious hospitality to all. Our members represent a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, family configurations, political affiliations, sexual orientations, abilities, and religious traditions. We are single, married, partnered, divorced, widowed, remarried, gay and lesbian, with and without children, empty nesters, old and young, and differently-abled; you name it - we are here, and we’re glad you’ve come.

Kid’s Kits and Sunday Papers are located at the Wisconsin Avenue entrance to the sanctuary.

For more information about St. John’s, see the St. John’s Notes and News bulletin.
THE WORD OF GOD

Voluntary  Benedictus

Please stand and sing

Hymn at the Procession  66 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

The Opening Acclamation

Celebrant  Blessed are you, holy and living One.
People  You come to your people and set them free.

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Leader  Praise to you, O God, who lives with us
sharing our flesh and bones.
As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed,
so we wait and dream for you.
bless us and let your face shine upon us,
more radiant than these candles,
and more dear than all else we seek.
Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good,
and banish all our fears.
We pray in the name of Emmanuel.
your promised child and our Savior.

People  Amen.

The four candles of the Advent wreath are lit.
The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Celebrant Let us pray.
People Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated

The Reading

Romans 1:1-7

Lector A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans.

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.

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

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

Hear, O Shepherd, leading Joseph like a flock; shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim. In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come to help us. Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people? You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink. You have made us the derision of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh us to scorn. Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, the son of man you have made so strong for yourself. And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your Name. Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
Please stand and sing

**Hymn at the Sequence**  “Emmanuel, Emmanuel”  McGEE

\[\text{Music notation}\]

The Gospel

**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:

“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.

Please be seated

The Sermon  The Rev. John Talbird
Please stand as you are able

The Nicene Creed

**People**

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

**Leader**

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ’s presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for hope.  
_A brief silence._

God of all, your children everywhere cry out for mercy. Awaken the global church to the urgent needs of our time. Break down barriers of culture and custom and unite people of all faiths in your redemptive and healing work.

God, in your mercy,

**People**  
Hear our prayer.

**Leader**

God of wonder, the earth’s beauty and abundance is your gift. Teach us your ways of sharing resources and caring for life. Restore to balance and wholeness what human greed has harmed.

God, in your mercy,

**People**  
Hear our prayer.
Leader  God of peace, you judge the nations. Beat our weapons into tools for serving our neighbors. Strengthen the resolve of all who work to end war. We pray for lasting peace in Ukraine, in the land of Jesus’ birth, and in all places suffering from violence.

God, in your mercy,

People  Hear our prayer.

Leader  God of loving-kindness, you desire fullness of life for everyone. Fill those who hunger, comfort the grieving, and attend to the sick. Bring help and hope to all who need your care.

God, in your mercy,

People  Hear our prayer.

Leader  God of community, you are present when we gather in your name. Shape us in your image, welcoming one another as you have welcomed us. Nurture our ministries of hospitality and care, and fortify those who serve them.

God, in your mercy,

People  Hear our prayer.

Leader  God of promise, your goodness is everlasting. We give thanks for the lives of the faithful who now rest in you, especially those we now name (brief silence for remembrances). We trust that you will bring us into the company of all the saints with rejoicing.

God in your mercy,

People  Hear our prayer.

The Confession of Sin

Deacon  Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

People  God of new beginnings,

we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign.
We have strayed from your paths.
We prepare for war instead of peace.
We dishonor one another and your creation.
Purify us with your refining fire and set us again on your way of life, that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance
and welcome your coming among us.

Celebrant  People of God, a new thing is growing in our midst; a tender branch, and living sign.

By water and the Spirit you are joined to this wonder.
You have put on Christ, and your sins have been washed away.

Rejoice in the way of the Lord.

People  Amen.

The Peace

Celebrant  The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People  And also with you.
The Holy Communion

Anthem at the Offertory Mary Had a Baby

Mary had a Baby, My Lord!
Where was he born? Born in a manger, My Lord!
What did they call him?
He is called “King Jesus,” “Mighty Counselor,” “King Emmanuel,”
“Mighty God,” “Everlasting Father,” “Prince of Peace.”
Mary had a Baby, My Lord!

-trad. Spiritual

Please stand and sing

Hymn at the Presentation

Veni, Veni Emmanuel

The Great Thanksgiving

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 our thanks and praise.

Celebrant It is right, and a good and joyful thing to give thanks to you, God of all time and eternity. You brought into being your glorious creation and crafted human life in your image. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. Through your prophets you promised to make us a people bound to you in love, and sent among us your Son, Jesus Christ: child of grace and light to all your people. Therefore, it is with joy on our lips that we join with all the company of heaven in their unending hymn of praise:
Sanctus and Benedictus

Celebrant

God of all blessing, in Jesus you fill the hungry with good things. You bestow mercy from generation to generation. You show us the cost and glory of your salvation in the breaking and pouring and sharing of bread and wine. As you turn swords into ploughshares, take our brokenness and reshape us for salvation. Stir in us the wakening hope that soon we will welcome you among us in the flesh.

On the night before he died for us, our brother Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

After supper he took the cup of wine, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of your gift of love in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

People

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Celebrant

Send among us your Holy Spirit, that your people may be sanctified by your grace, that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, and that we, in turn, may be the body of Christ for the world.

Steadfast God, we await the fulfillment of your Advent promise. May waters break forth in the wilderness, and exiled wanderers return home rejoicing. Unite your people, embrace us in your Spirit, and fill us with the hope of Advent: the substance of things hoped for and the knowledge of things unseen, until all are united with you in Jesus Christ, through whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God, now and for ever.

People

Amen.
The Lord's Prayer

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,
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,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Fraction Anthem

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated bread.

Celebrant
All are welcome at the Lord’s table.
If you are joining us from home this morning,
we invite you at this time to partake of the consecrated bread and wine made available to you.
We who are many, and in many places, are one body,
People because we all share in one bread and one cup.
Celebrant The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Communion of the People

All who hunger for God are invited to the Lord’s Table. Gluten-free wafers are available.
To receive a blessing instead of communion, please come forward and cross your arms over your chest.
If you require assistance to reach the altar or need to receive Communion at your seat,
please inform a Welcome Team member.
Solo at the Communion  “O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings”  
G.F. Handel (1685-1759)  
from Messiah, HWV 56

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain. 
O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; 
lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold you God! 
O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, arise, shine; for thy light is come, 
and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Hymn at the Communion  268 “Ye Who Claim the Faith of Jesus”  
Julion

1 Ye who claim the faith of Jesus, sing the wonders that were done when the love of God the
whom the Lord did come; blessed was the land of
honour of her name; let the Church, in her fore-
Saviour I rejoice; all the ages call me

Father o’er sin the victory won, when he promise fashioned for his earthly home; but more
shadowed, part in her thanks-giving claim; what Christ’s bless-ed, in his praise I lift my voice; he has

made the Virgin Mary mother of his only Son, bless-ed far the mother, she who bore him in her womb.
mother sang in gladness let Christ’s people sing the same.
cast down all the might-y, and the low-ly are his choice.”
The Prayer after Communion

Celebrant  Let us pray.
People  Faithful God,
in this meal you have remembered your mercy,
bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ.
As we wait for the day when your promises will be fulfilled,
sustain and strengthen us by this holy mystery.
Guide us toward your promised future,
coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The Blessing

The Celebrant blesses the people.

People  Amen.

Hymn at the Closing  72 “Hark! The Glad Sound!”

1 Hark! the glad sound! the Sa - vior comes, the Sa - vior
2 He comes, the pris - oners to re - lease in Sa - tan’s
3 He comes, the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, thy wel - come
prom - ised long; let ev - ‘ry heart pre - bond - age held; the gates of brass be -
soul to cure; and with the trea - sures shall pro - claim; and heav’n’s e - ter - nal
pare a throne, and ev - ‘ry voice a song,
fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.
of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.
arch - es ring with thy be - lov - ed Name.

The Dismissal

Deacon  Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
People  Thanks be to God.

Voluntary  Fugue on the Magnificat, BWV 733  J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

All are invited to stay as the children present the Christmas Pageant.
Elementary-age children who are interested in participating and wearing a costume
should gather in the back of the church.
Younger children may also come forward to the manger scene during
"Go Tell It on the Mountain" (along with a parent, if they prefer).
**THE NATIVITY STORY**

**Christmas Carols**

*Please sing along as the children present the Christmas Pageant.*

### “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

ST. LOUIS

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
   Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
   Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
   The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

2. For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above
   While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wonder love.
   O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
   And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all the earth!

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### “Once in Royal David’s City”

IRBY

1. Once in royal David’s city stood a lowly manger
   Baby in a manager for his bed; Mary was that mother mild.

2. He came down to earth from heaven, who is Lord of all, and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall; with the poor, the scorned, the lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.
“Away in a Manger”

1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes. I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay close by me for your tender care and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

“Joy to the World”

1 Joy to the world! The Lord is come; let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heav’n and nature sing, and heav’n and nature sing.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glory of his righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
All children in the congregation and their parents are invited to come forward with their candles.

Please light the candles for the final stanza.
ABOUT THIS SERVICE

At St. John’s we worship with the most expansive language we can to invoke the great mystery that is God among us. The music, poetry, and prayers in this liturgy have been adapted for our use with permissions from the following sources:

The Book of Common Prayer
Sundays & Seasons
The Hymnal 1982
African American Heritage Hymnal

Leaders in the Liturgy

Clergy
The Rev. John Talbird, Preacher
The Rev. Sarah Reynolds, Associate Rector, Celebrant
The Rev. Anne Derse, Deacon & Minister for Community Engagement

Musicians
Karl Robson, Director of Music
The St. John’s Choir

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