



# ST. THOMAS'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

LONGEST NIGHT

A Liturgy of Healing

December 20, 2020

6 P.M.



*The Annunciation* by Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937). Tanner, an American working in Paris, painted it soon after returning to Paris from a trip to Egypt and Palestine in 1897. The son of a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Tanner specialized in religious subjects, and wanted to experience the people, culture, architecture, and light of the Holy Land. Influenced by what he saw, Tanner created an unconventional image of the moment when the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will bear the Son of God. Mary is shown as an adolescent dressed in rumpled Middle Eastern peasant clothing, without a halo or other holy attributes. Gabriel appears only as a shaft of light. Tanner entered this painting in the 1898 Paris Salon exhibition, after which it was bought for the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1899, making it his first work to enter an American museum.

## GATHERING MUSIC

Come thou long expected Jesus  
*(composed and performed by Russ Hitt)*

*Officiant*

If I say, “Surely the darkness will cover me, and the light around me turn to night,” darkness is not dark to you, O Lord; the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike. *Psalm 139:10, 11*

## OPENING RITE

Presider: God be with you.

**People:** **And also with you.**

Presider: Let us pray.

God our healer, whose mercy is like a refining fire: by the lovingkindness of Jesus, heal us and those for whom we pray; that being renewed by you, we may witness your wholeness to our broken world; through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Spirit. **Amen.**

## PSALM 23

*(composed and performed by Bobby McFerrin)*

## REFLECTION

### A LITANY OF HEALING

*Presider*

Let us name before God those for whom we offer our prayers. You may name them in the silence of your heart, but I encourage you to unmute yourself and name them aloud.

*Intercessor and People*

God the Father, your will for all people is health and salvation; **We praise you and thank you, O Lord.**

God the Son, you came that we might have life, and might have it more abundantly; **We praise you and thank you, O Lord.**

God the Holy Spirit, you make our bodies the temple of your presence; **We praise you and thank you, O Lord.**

Holy Trinity, one God, in you we live and move and have our being; **We praise you and thank you, O Lord.**

Lord, grant your grace to all who need healing, that they may be made whole; **Hear us, O Lord of life.**

Grant to all who seek your guidance, and to all who are lonely, anxious, or despondent, a knowledge of your will and an awareness of your presence; **Hear us, O Lord of life.**

Mend broken relationships, and restore those in emotional distress to soundness of mind and serenity of spirit; **Hear us, O Lord of life.**

Bless physicians, nurses, and all others who minister to the suffering, granting them wisdom and skill, sympathy and patience; **Hear us, O Lord of life.**

Grant to the dying peace and a holy death, and uphold by the grace and consolation of your Holy Spirit those who are bereaved; **Hear us, O Lord of life.**

Restore to wholeness whatever is broken by human sin, in our lives, in our nation, and in the world; **Hear us, O Lord of life.**

You are the Lord who does wonders: **You have declared your power among the peoples.**

With you, O Lord, is the well of life: **And in your light we see light.**

Hear us, O Lord of life: **Heal us, and make us whole.**

*Presider*

O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## CONFESSION OF NEED

*Presider*

Let us confess our need for God's healing grace. [*Silence is kept.*]

*Presider and People*

**Compassionate God,  
we confess our weaknesses and our need for your strengthening touch.  
We confess that some illnesses stem from our own fault,  
while others are beyond our control.  
We turn to you, source of life,  
and ask in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ  
for the gifts of true healing and life in you. Amen.**

*Presider*

May the God of love visit you in your times of trial and weakness, and raise you to newness of life, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## THE PEACE

**Presider:** The peace of Christ be always with you.

**People:** And also with you.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

*You are invited to say the Lord's Prayer in the language of your choice.*

**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.**

## ADVENT BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

*Presider*

May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

**Presider:** Let us bless the Lord.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

## CONCLUDING MUSIC

O come, O come Emmanuel  
*(composed and performed by Russ Hitt)*