

The Blessing of the Crèche & A Telling of the Christmas Story



SAINT THOMAS CHURCH FIFTH AVENUE

in the
CITY OF NEW YORK



The Reverend Canon Carl F. Turner, *Rector*

Welcome to Saint Thomas Church, a parish of the Episcopal Diocese of New York.
Our mission is to worship, love, and serve Our Lord Jesus Christ
through the Anglican tradition and our unique choral heritage.

December 13, 2025, 4pm

*Please turn off or silence your mobile devices. Please do not take photographs or make recordings.
To contact us, email welcome@SaintThomasChurch.org.*

Welcome to Saint Thomas Church from all of us in the Children and Family Ministry!

Our mission is to cultivate nurturing environments for children and families to grow in their relationships with God. We are blessed to have incredible staff who prayerfully and skillfully work for children and families in all variety of needs. We take great care in making every child and family feel welcome. We hope you enjoy this Crèche Service, a Telling of the Christmas Story.

Many Blessings!

The Children and Family Ministry Team at Saint Thomas

9am Mass

A 50-minute, Rite II Eucharist Service made with children and family's needs in mind. Children serve in every capacity as lay ministers, and the sermon is co-constructed using the children's insights.

Noble Singers

Our Children's Choir sings every Sunday at the 9am Mass.

Rehearsals are on Thursdays from 4:15-5:15. Any child ages 5-14+ is welcome to join, no previous singing experience needed! Please email our Music Associate for Children and Families, Jennifer Lane at JLane@SaintThomasChurch.org for more information.

10am Formation

With material that is rich, participatory, and Bible-centered, children from Pre-K – High School receive age-specific theological education and formation. Formation is from 10-10:45am following the 9am Mass.

Formation Classrooms

Early Childhood | Pre-K-1st Grade

Intermediate | Grades 2-5

Faith Alive | Grades 6-10+

All CFM staff and volunteers receive a background check and safeguarding training. Feel free to email at ChildrenandFamilies@SaintThomasChurch.org or follow this QR Code for more information.



Welcome and Opening Prayer

Father Preston

Hymn (verses 1, 2, 3 & 6)

Adeste fideles

The People stand. The hymn is sung by all.

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
 2 God from God, Light from Light e - ter - nal,
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 *4 See how the shep - herds, sum - moned to his cra - dle,
 *5 Child, for us sin - ners poor and in the man - ger,

1 come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
 2 lo! he ab - hors not the Vir - gin's womb;
 3 sing, all ye ci - ti - zens of heaven a - bove;
 4 leav - ing their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
 5 we would em - brace thee, with love and awe;

1 come, and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;
 2 on - ly - be - got - ten Son of the Fa - ther;
 3 glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est;
 4 we too will thith - er bend our joy - ful foot - steps;
 5 who would not love thee, lov - ing us so dear - ly?

Refrain

O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a -



6 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
 born this happy morning;
 Jesus, to thee be glory given;
 Word of the Father,
 now in flesh appearing;

Refrain

Words: John Francis Wade (1711-1786); tr. Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880) and others. Music: *Adeste fideles*, present form of melody att. John Francis Wade (1711-1786); harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906.

The People Sit for the Reading.

Reading

Luke 1:1-4

Many people have attempted to write about the things that have taken place among us, and reports from many eyewitnesses have been handed down. So, I also decided to write an orderly report of exactly what happened most excellent Theophilus. I am doing this for you because I want you to know that the things you have been taught are true.

Anthem *Sung by the Choir.*

arr. Drummond Wolff

Sing joy, glad voices lift,
 Honor God, the highest Gift,
 Who such wondrous deeds performs,
 Who sent his own beloved Son to save us,
 Everlasting life though Him He gave us.

Truly, truly! God was born of a lowly maid.
 Out of His great love the Father willed it.
 On this day did He appear, Christ Jesus dear,
 Immanuel,
 Brings to us salvation, Saves from death and hell.

See how angels in the sky God in heaven glorify.
 Sing as they the glad refrain
 Of peace on earth, good will to men and blessing,
 Exultation in the song expressing,

Truly, truly! So bless we the Christ Child then,
 Join their chorus, sing again with gladness:
 'Glory be to God on high, On high,
 On earth be peace, to men good will.
 Joy and wonder evermore each heart may fill.

Reading

Luke 1: 26-35; 38

An Angel Appears to Mary

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man from the house of David, whose name was Joseph. The virgin's name was Mary. And the Angel came to her and said, "Greetings, Favored One! The Lord is with you." But she was very perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will visit you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

At that time Mary went to visit her relative Elizabeth who was also with child. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting her child leaped for joy in her stomach, and Mary began to sing with celebration.

Anthem *Sung by the Choir.*

Simon Lindley

*Ave Maria, gratia plena
Dominus tecum;
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.
Amen.*

*Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with thee;
Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.*

Reading

Luke 1:56 - 2:7

No Room in the Inn

And Mary remained with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned to her home.

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

Because he belonged to the house and line of David, Joseph also went up from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the town of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was engaged to be married to him and was expecting a child. They were looking for a place to stay, but there was no room for them anywhere...

While they were still in Bethlehem, the time came for the baby to be born, and Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son.

She wrapped him in bands of cloth and had to place him in a manger—a large box that normally housed the animals' food—because there was no guest room for them.

The figures are added to the Crèche.



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!

2 For Christ is born of Ma - ry; and gath - ered all a - bove,

3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!

*4 Where child - ren pure and hap - py pray to the bless - ed Child,

5 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scent to us, we pray;

1 A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by;

2 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.

3 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven.

4 where mis - er - ry cries out to thee, Son of the mo - ther mild;

5 cast out our sin and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.

1 yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;

2 O morn - ing stars, to - ge - th - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!

3 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,

4 where char - i - ty stands watch - ing and faith holds wide the door,

5 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

1 the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.

2 and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

3 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.

4 the dark night wakes, the glo - ry breaks, and Christ - mas comes once more.

5 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

Words: Phillips Brooks (1835-1893). Music: *St. Louis*, Lewis H. Redner (1831-1908).

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you

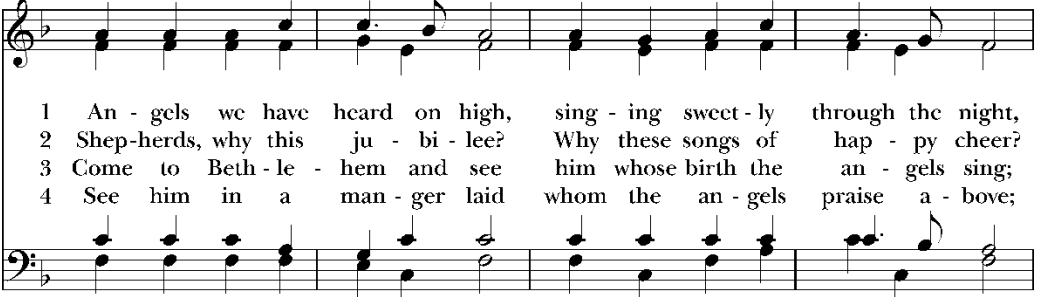
good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace, goodwill to all people!”

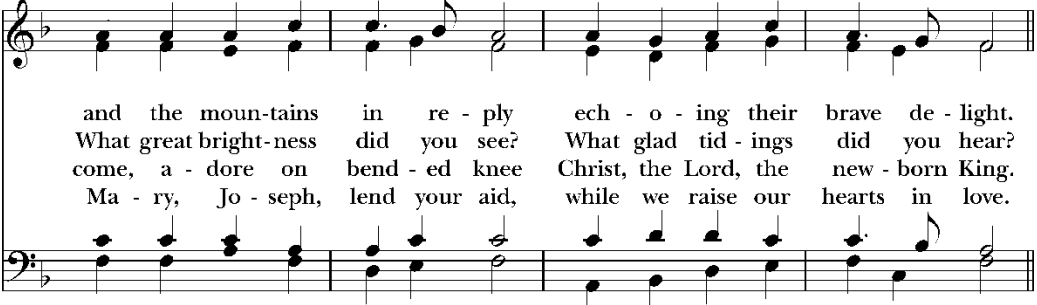
The People Stand.

Hymn *Sung by all.*

GLORIA



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sing - ing sweet - ly through the night,
 2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why these songs of hap - py cheer?
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;
 4 See him in a man - ger laid whom the an - gels praise a - bove;



and the moun-tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their brave de - light.
 What great bright-ness did you see? What glad tid - ings did you hear?
 come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.
 Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love.

Refrain



Glo - - - - - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - - - - -

The figures are added to the Crèche.

The Shepherds Visit Jesus

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

When they had seen Jesus, they spread the word concerning what had been told to them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Anthem *Sung by the Choir.*

Maks Adach
(b. 1993)

I am looking for Jesus, I want to find him,
But I don’t know the way.
I heard angels announcing the wondrous tidings;
I’ll travel night and day.

*Show me the way to Bethlehem!
I’m coming from Jerusalem!
Show me the way to Bethlehem!
So I don’t go astray!*

You can follow the brightest illumination;
You can see the star.
You might find it surprising he’s in a stable
With wise men from afar.

*Follow that star to Bethlehem!
It leads you to Jerusalem!
Follow that star to Bethlehem,
And see the babe in the hay!*

I followed that star as it shone through the night,
And all was calm and bright.
Now I see the shepherds and Mary, Joseph,
And Kings with gifts just right!

*I have arrived in Bethlehem;
I’ve come from Jerusalem!
I have arrived in Bethlehem,
And I’ve seen Jesus today!*

Text: Steve Draper, adapted by Sarah Norvell (b. 1992)

King Herod & the Magi

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?”

The Magi said, “we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this, he was very angry, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

After the Magi had heard the king, they went on their way.

And the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When the Magi saw the star, they were overjoyed!

The figures are added to the Crèche.

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, the Magi returned to their country by another route.

*Here betwixt ass and oxen mild,
Sleep, sleep, sleep my little child.
Angels from on high hover in the sky,
Keeping watch above the incarnate God of Love.*

*Here in the crib, secure from harms
Sleep, sleep, in your mother's arms.
Angels from on high hover in the sky,
Keeping watch above the incarnate God of Love.*

*Here betwixt rose and lily white,
Sleep, sleep, sleep my son tonight.
Angels from on high hover in the sky,
Keeping watch above the incarnate God of Love.*

*On this fair night of holy joy,
Sleep, sleep, sleep my little boy.
Angels from on high hover in the sky,
Keeping watch above the incarnate God of Love.
Amen.*

The Blessing of the Crèche

Father Turner

The People stand.

Priest Our help is in the name of the Lord.

People **Who has made heaven and earth.**

Priest The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Priest Let us pray.

O God of every nation and people, from the beginning of creation You have made manifest Your love. You sent Your Son to be born of the Blessed Virgin Mary when our need for a Savior was great. To our lives He brings joy, peace, justice, mercy, and love. Lord, bless this manger and all who look upon it devoutly; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise up our thoughts to Him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Si - lent night, ho - ly night, all is calm,
 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, shep - herds quake
 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God,

all is bright round yon vir - gin mo - ther and child.
 at the sight, glo - rics stream from hea - ven a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face,

Ho - ly in - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in hea - ven - ly
 heaven - ly hosts— sing al - le - lu - ia; Christ, the Sa - vior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy

peace. born! birth. Sleep Christ, the Sa - vior, is born! birth.
 Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

Words: Joseph Mohr (1792-1848); tr. John Freeman Young (1820-1885). Music: *Stille Nacht*, melody Franz Xaver Gruber (1787-1863); harm. Carl H. Reinecke (1824-1910).

Blessing

May the humility of the shepherds, the joy of the angels,
 the holiness of Mary and the peace of the Christ Child,
 be God's gift to us and to all people, this Christmas and always.
 And the Blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
 be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth re -
 2 Joy to the world! the Sa - vior reigns; let us our
 *3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in -
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the

ceive her King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room, and
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, re -
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow far and
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous - ness, and

heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture
 peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

1 and heaven and na - ture sing, and
 2 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -
 3 far as the curse is found, far
 4 and won - ders of his love, and

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heaven and na - ture sing,
 peat the sound - ing joy,
 as the curse is found,
 won - ders of his love,

Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748), alt. Music: *Antioch*, George Frideric Handel (1685-1759); adapt. and arr. Lowell Mason (1792-1872).

Dismissal

Go in the peace and joy of Christ:
People Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Children and parents of family of children
are invited upstairs to Andrew Hall for a Family Feast!

Neighbor To Neighbor

The Saint Thomas Community Outreach Program



The Saint Thomas Social Outreach program **Neighbor to Neighbor** provides coffee, tea, croissants, and fresh fruit to community members in need. The program serves guests between 9am and 10am every Saturday, with volunteers arriving at the cloisters of the church on 53rd Street around 8:30am. Please note there is a signup form for interested volunteers to ensure we do not have too many or too few present. If you are interested in knowing more about the program and getting involved, **please register to the mailing list for this group using the QR code:**



THE PILGRIMS' COURSE 2026

The Christian Faith for Newcomers

The **Pilgrims' Course** offers a warm and inviting introduction to the Christian faith and to how Saint Thomas lives out the Gospel in the Episcopal tradition through worship, love, and service to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who is it for?

Designed especially *for those new to Saint Thomas*, this fifteen-week course pairs thoughtful talks with shared reflection and the chance to experience community over a light meal.

When?

Tuesdays, January to May
Beginning January 13, 2026
6:30 to 8:00 pm
In Person Only

Where?

Saint Thomas Church • Parish House, 1 W 53rd Street

What to Expect?

- A warm and friendly welcome
- Meaningful conversation and shared learning
- Clear, accessible introductions to Christian belief and practice

Register today and receive the full schedule and details!



WORSHIP & RECITALS THIS WEEK

* indicates livestreamed.

Sunday 14th

11 a.m. Festal Eucharist*

Sung by the Choir of Men and Boys
followed by Coffee Hour at the back of the Lady Chapel
 Sermon by Fr. Gioia

4 p.m. Festal Evensong*

sung by the Choir of Men and Boys
 Sermon by Fr. Gonzalez-Grissom

5:15 p.m. Organ Recital

LA NATIVITÉ DU SEIGNEUR– Olivier Messiaen
(Nine Meditations on the Birth of Our Lord)
Richard Tanner, organ *The Nancy B. and John B. Hoffmann Organist and Director of Music*

Monday 15th December – Friday 19th December

12 p.m. Shrine Prayers*

12:05 p.m. Holy Eucharist*

Wednesday 17th – O Sapientia

5:30 p.m. Choral Evensong*

Followed by a short, said Mass.
Sung by the Choir of Men and Boys and the Choir of St. Paul's, Harvard Square, Cambridge, MA.
Music by Millington, Moore, and MacMillan.

Thursday 18th

5:30 p.m. CONCERT: CHRISTMAS ON FIFTH*

Sung by the Choristers of the Choir of Men and Boys.

Friday 19th

3 p.m. Contemplative Prayer

Saturday 20th

12 p.m. CONCERT: CHRISTMAS ON FIFTH

Sung by the Choristers of the Choir of Men and Boys.

Next Sunday: December 21st

The Fourth Sunday of Advent – O Oriens

7:45 a.m. Said Mass

9 a.m. Sung Mass

Sung by the Noble Singers
followed by Coffee Hour in the Parish House

11 a.m. Solemn Eucharist*

Sung by the Choir of Men and Boys
followed by Coffee Hour at the back of the Lady Chapel
 Sermon by The Rector

4 p.m. A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols*

Sung by the Choir of Men and Boys
Music by Ledger, Poston, Sheils, Flecha, Moore, K. Briggs, Owens, Tanner, Darke, Rutter, Millington, and Wilberg.

Parish Notices

Children and Family Ministries The Children's area (near the icon of Saint Thomas) is available for families during all services, with quiet activities for young children. The Nursery also continues to be available for the sole use of babies and toddlers with their parents/caregivers, from 9am-1pm on Sundays in the Parish House, 3rd floor. To receive more information, contact childrenandfamilies@saintthomaschurch.org.

The **Noble Singers**, our children's parish choir for singers (ages 5-14+) sing in the 9am Mass. Rehearsals are on Thursdays from 4:15-5:15pm, and new singers are always welcome. No audition is necessary, just enthusiasm and a love of music! For more information, and to register your singer, contact JLane@saintthomaschurch.org.

Saint Thomas Choir School is home to the boy choristers of the Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys. Since September 2025, the Choir School (grades 4-8) has partnered with Professional Children's School for the boys' academic education, while they continue to live and train at STCS in a close-knit, music-centered environment. They sing five weekly services at Saint Thomas Church and perform in the Concerts at Saint Thomas series. If you know a boy who loves to sing and may thrive in this unique setting, please contact Margaret White at mwhite@choirschool.org.

Concerts at Saint Thomas the Boys of the Saint Thomas Choir in their annual winter concert entitled *Christmas on Fifth* featuring traditional carols and contemporary Christmas favorites. Ring in the festive season with the boy choristers on December 18 at 5:30pm or December 20 at noon. Tickets for in person and livestream are available now at www.saintthomaschurch.org/music/concerts

You are cordially invited to the Holy Eucharist in the Korean language every second Sunday of the month at 1:30pm. It is preceded by brunch at 12:45pm in the Dining Room of the Parish House. 매달 둘째 주일 오후 1:30에 본당에서 올리는 한국어 감사 성찬례에 여러분을 초대합니다. 오후 12:45에 2층 식당에서 브런치를 함께 나누니 조금 일찍 오셔서 친교도 나누세요. 아래 주소로 등록하시면 월요일 아침묵상글을 이메일로 받아볼 수 있습니다. <https://mailchi.mp/saintthomaschurch/korean>.

Contemplative Prayer takes place on Fridays at 3pm in the Resurrection Chapel. You are welcome to join this sacred time of silent prayer and quiet praise in the presence of God. The service includes Taizé Songs, Centering Prayer, and Lectio-Divina, and is led by Mo. Prisca Lee-Pae. For more information, please contact Mo. Lee-Pae at pleepae@SaintThomasChurch.org.

The Saint Thomas Theological Education Program, rooted in Scripture, tradition, and spirituality, is for those who seek a deeper understanding of faith, worship and prayer. Lecturers are The Rev. Dr. Luigi Gioia, Theologian in Residence, and internationally renowned guest speakers committed to making theology accessible to non-specialists. Classes are held Sundays at 10am on the 5th Floor of the Parish House and are streamed online. For more info, contact Fr. Luigi Gioia: lgioia@saintthomaschurch.org.

Explore the Beauty and History of Saint Thomas Church each Sunday following the 11am service with a guided tour. These tours offer a unique opportunity to delve into the rich history, sacred art, and exquisite architectural details of our landmark building. To take part, please meet the Tour Guide at the "Tour Guide - Meet Here" sign on the south side of the Narthex. All are warmly welcome.

Friday Bible Study occurs at 1pm on Zoom, currently focusing on the book of Ecclesiastes. To receive the zoom link, contact Fr. Brown at mbrown@saintthomaschurch.org

The Angelus Tree. We invite you to donate gifts for disadvantaged children and children who will spend Christmas Day in a municipal shelter this year. We also give gifts to children who are with their mothers in a shelter for those who are escaping domestic violence. Simply take a gift tag from the tree and bring your gift unwrapped before Christmas. If you prefer to make a donation and for us to shop for the gift, use the QR code:



Christmas Candles in Memory of Loved Ones: During Christmastide, the time between Christmas Day and New Year's Day, we will light an eight-day candle for your loved one(s), and place it before the Crèche of Saint Thomas Church. Each candle will be affixed with the name(s) you submit. The suggested donation for each eight-day candle is \$25. All of these names will be added to the prayer list during Christmastide.



Contributions for Christmas Flower Memorials are now being received in memory of departed loved ones. The names of the faithful departed in whose memory the church will be adorned will be listed in the Christmas service leaflet on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. In order to cover the cost of Christmas flowers, we suggest a minimum donation of \$25 per name. Please send your check, made payable to Saint Thomas Church, and a printed list of those in whose memory you are making your donation to the parish house receptionist. You can also email your list to giving@saintthomaschurch.org. We cannot guarantee that any names received after December 8 will appear in print, but will be printed and placed on the altar for the Christmas services. The deadline is Monday, December 8 for names printed in the leaflets.

