



CELTIC EVENSONG AND COMMUNION

at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

Welcome to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. We welcome and include all people without exception and invite you to participate fully in worship and after the service to enjoy the community supper in the fellowship hall. Throughout this bulletin, helpful guidance is printed in italics. Nursery care is available (infant-4); speak with a door greeter. Visitor guides are available at entrances. When you want to be known here, place a Welcome card (in all pews, or submit online) in the basket by the baptismal font. The church is open for prayer from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Thursday. From 5:10, the church is ready for prayer and rest. Please observe silence inside the church and remember to silence all devices.

Prelude *Si Hei Lwli Mabi* (Lullaby) trad. Welsh, arr. Jeffrey Howard and Douglas Townshend
Please stand at the sound of the bell.

Opening Poem for Advent Michael Podesta

If we fill our lives with things,
and again with things,
if we must fill every moment of our lives with action,
when will we have the time
to make the long slow journey across the desert
as did the Magi?
Or sit and watch the stars

as did the Shepherds?
Or brood over the coming of the child
as did Mary?
For each of us, there is a desert to travel,
a star to discover,
and a being within ourselves to bring to life.
Silence is held after the reading.

Hymn Unexpected and mysterious *Sung by all, standing.* St. Helena



1. Un-ex-pect-ed and mys-te-ri-ous is the gen-tle
2. In a mo-men-tar-y meet-ing of e-ter-ni-ty
3. We are called to pon-der mys-t'ry and a-wait the



word of grace. Ev-er-lov-ing and sus-tain-ing is the peace of
ty and time, Mar-y learned that she would car-ry both the mor-tal
com-ing Christ, to em-bod-y God's com-pas-sion for each frag-ile



God's em-brace. If we fal-ter in our cour-age
and di-vine. The she learned of God's com-pas-sion,
hu-man life. God is with us in our long-ing



and we doubt what we have known, God is faith-ful
of E-liz-a-beth's great joy, and she ran to
to bring heal-ing to the earth, while we watch with



to con-sole us as a moth-er tends her own,
greet the wom-an who would rec-og-nize her boy,
joy and won-der for the prom-ised Sav-ior's birth.

A Prayer for the Evening

In the quiet of this place
in the dark of the night
we wait and watch.
In the stillness of the soul
and from its fathomless depths
the senses of our hearts are awake to you.
For fresh soundings of life
for new showings of light
we search in the silence of your Spirit, O God. **Amen.**

The Reading Luke 1:39-55 *Please sit.*

Reader A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Silence is held for one minute of reflection.

Reflection Angela DeVoun

Silence is held for two minutes of reflection.

Music for Meditation I wonder as I wander

Appalachian folk song, arr. David Cherwien

Prayers for Ourselves and Others *Please stand.*

Deacon Let us pray for ourselves and the world.

Leader Loving God, enliven the Church for its mission,

People **That we may be salt of the earth and light to the world.**

Leader Breathe fresh life into your people.

People **Give us power to reveal Christ in our daily lives.**

Leader Creator of all, lead us into your ways of justice and peace

People **That we may respect one another in freedom and truth.**

Leader Awaken in us a sense of wonder for the earth and all that is in it.

People **Teach us to care creatively for this fragile world.**

Leader God of truth, inspire with your wisdom those whose decisions affect the lives of others.

People **That all may live with integrity and courage.**

Leader Give grace to all those whose lives are linked with ours.

People **May we serve Christ in one another, and love as Christ loves us.**

Leader Receive the gratitude of our hearts, [especially ____].

The people may add their intercessions either silently or aloud.

Leader Open our hearts with compassion to suffering throughout the world, for the earth's plants, animals and ecosystems, and all who bear the wounds of human violence, indifference, abuse, conflict, and aggression.

The people may add their intercessions either silently or aloud.

Leader We pray for our losses, for those who mourn, and for those who have died, [especially ____].

The people may add their intercessions either silently or aloud.

Leader Lord, you have called us to serve you.

People **Grant that we may walk in your presence:
your love in our hearts,
your truth in our minds,
your strength in our wills,
until, at the end of our journey,
we know the joy of our homecoming
and the welcome of your embrace,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Candle Lighting, Additional Prayers

Lighting candles is as potent a symbol of offering one's prayer to God as candlelight is of God's abiding presence. All may light one votive at any station, now and hereafter. This Church is open daily for prayer and rest, and a permanent votive station is located near the piano in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit.

Music for Meditation Lo, how a rose

arr. John Purifoy

Hymn If in your heart *Sung by all, standing.* Ana Hernández

The congregation will repeat the refrain as the cantor sings the verses.

If in your heart you make a manger for his birth, then
God will once a - gain be - come a child on earth, If
in your heart you make a manger for his birth, then
God will once a - gain be - come a child on earth.

The Grace Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly. **Amen.** *Isaiah 58:6-8a*

The Peace May Christ, the Good Shepherd, bind us with a bond of love that cannot be broken. The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

All greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying "peace."

The Holy Communion

Welcome and Announcements

All comes from God, so from all God has given into our care, we offer gifts from our gratitude. Please place offerings into the basket near the baptismal font or food pantry items into the baskets by the main entrance, or make a gift online by scanning the QR code or texting STSTEPHENSVA to 73256.



At the Offertory *Berceuse*

John Ireland

The Great Thanksgiving *Please stand.* Adapted from *In This Season of Waiting*, Iona Community

Celebrant O come, O come, Emmanuel.

People **God comes among us.**

Celebrant Let us give our hearts to God.

People **This is right and good.**

Celebrant The story of Emmanuel is the story of God – waiting to inhabit time, who took on flesh and form, and lived among us, so that we might re-imagine life.

It is the story of Jesus – waiting to be betrayed, who shared supper with his friends who took bread, offered the blessing, and said,

All **“This is my own body given for you. Do this, and know that I am with you.”**

Celebrant Then pouring, blessing, and sharing wine so that we might re-imagine love, he said,

All **“This is my life-blood poured out for you. Do this, and know that I am with you.”**

Celebrant It is the story of Christ – waiting in the tomb for God’s moment, who threw down the gates of hell and drew the sting of death so that we might re-imagine the world. It is the story of one who knows what it is to wait, and who shows us what it is to wait well.

And so, taking this bread and wine, we remember and celebrate the waiting which began to change the world; and we join our voices with all who still wait and work for that change to come to completion as we sing:

Sanctus

Sung by all.

William Trafka

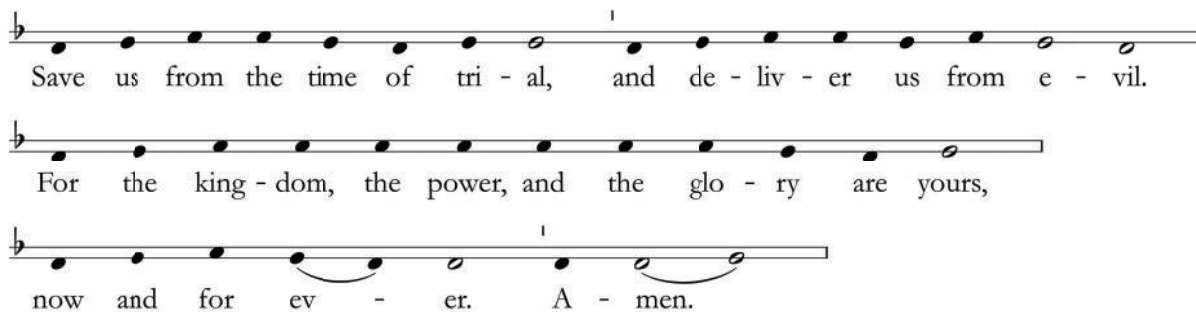
Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho -
san - na in the high - est. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Celebrant And as we follow the example of Jesus, send down your Holy Spirit on us, and on these gifts of bread and wine, that we may find the imagination, the courage and the strength to use our waiting times to build God’s Kingdom of joy, justice and peace.

People **Blessed be God, blessed be Son, blessed be Holy Spirit, now and ever. AMEN.**

The Lord’s Prayer

Cantor
As our Sa - vior Christ has taught us, we now pray,
All
Our Fa - ther in hea - ven, hal - lowed be your Name,
your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in hea - ven.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread.
For - give us our sins as we for - give those who sin a - gainst us.



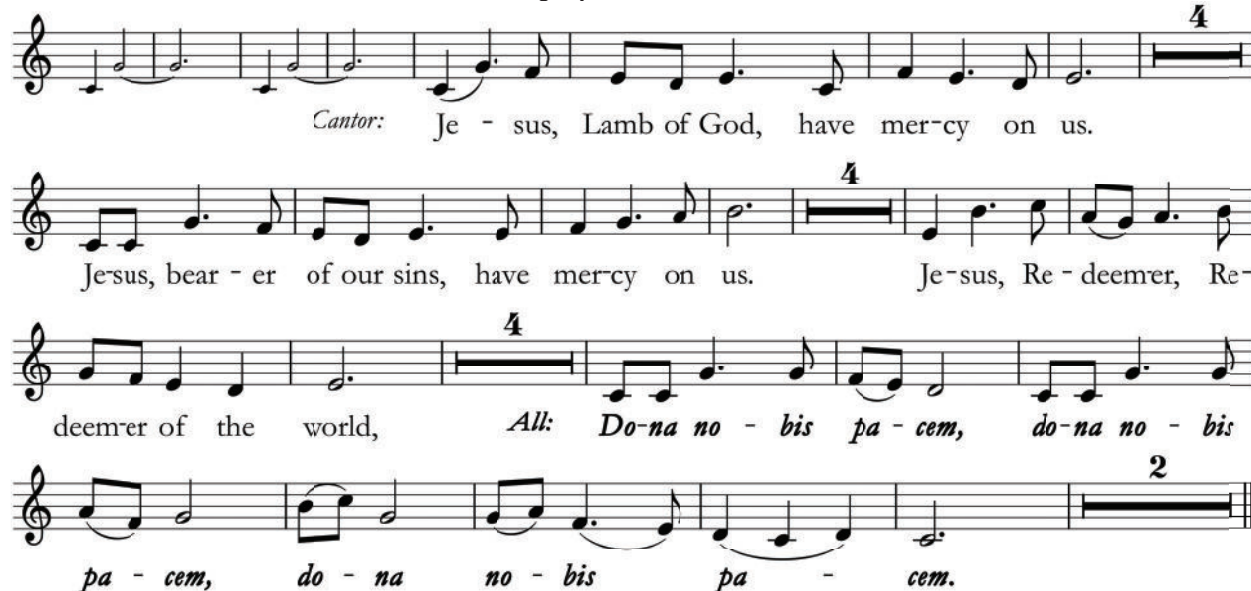
Save us from the time of tri - al, and de - liv - er us from e - vil.
 For the king - dom, the power, and the glo - ry are yours,
 now and for ev - er. A - men.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the bread. A period of silence is held.

Sung by all.

William Trafka



Cantor: Je - sus, Lamb of God, have mer - cy on us.
 Jesus, bear - er of our sins, have mercy on us. Je - sus, Re - deemer, Re -
 deemer of the world, *All:* Do - na no - bis pa - cem, do - na no - bis
 pa - cem, do - na no - bis pa - cem.

Translation: Give us your peace.

The Invitation

Celebrant This is the table, not of the Church, but of the Lord. It is made ready for those who love him and for those who want to love him more. So, come, you who have much faith and you who have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been here long, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come, because it is the Lord who invites you. It is his will that those who want him should meet him here.

At the Communion of the People

All who seek God's presence through Communion or God's blessing are welcome to come forward. Extend your hands, one upon another, to receive a bread wafer (request gluten-free) or, to receive God's blessing instead, cross your arms over your chest in an "X". Wine for sipping is offered next to the bread or dip the edge of your wafer in the small cup by the pillars. **Healing prayer and anointing** are offered to all at the side chapels from the beginning of Communion through the end of the service. More information is found at the end of this bulletin.

Music for Communion

Late December
 O come, O come Emmanuel
Divinum mysterium

Phil Coulter
 arr. Anne Krentz Organ
 arr. Justin McCarthy

After Communion

Please stand.

from *In this Season of Waiting*, Wild Goose Publications

Celebrant

The earth still waits for its healing...

All

**May we who are part of that waiting
take and use the dreaming times
to re-imagine the world;
inhabit and use the liminal times
to discover the patterns of God;
embrace and use the quickening times
to learn how to live and love;
thus may our watching and waiting
join with that of Emmanuel
to realize God's Kingdom
here on earth. Amen.**

The Blessing

Celebrant

Now, may the Lord Christ go before you to prepare your way;
Christ beside you, be companion to you everywhere you go;
Christ beneath you, strengthen and uphold you when you fall or fail;
Christ behind you, finish and complete what you must leave undone;
Christ within you, give you faith and courage, love and hope;
And Christ above you, bless and keep you, now and evermore. **Amen.**

Hymn

The angel Gabriel from heaven came

Sung by all, standing.

Gabriel's Message

1. The an - gel Ga - bri - el from hea - ven came, his
 2. "For know a bless - ed Mo - ther thou shalt be, all
 3. Then gen - tle Ma - ry meek - ly bowed her head, "To
 wings as drift - ed snow, his eyes as flame; "All
 gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee, thy
 me be as it pleas - eth God," she said, "my
 hail," said he, "thou low - ly maid - en Ma - ry, most
 Son shall be Em-man - u - el, by seers fore - told, most
 soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy his ho - ly Name," Most
 high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - ri - a!
 high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - ri - a!
 high - ly fa - vored la - dy, Glo - ri - a!

Dismissal

Deacon

Go out into the world in peace, have courage, hold on to what is good, return no one evil for evil, strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the suffering, honor everyone, love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People

Thanks be to God.

Music for Meditation *Aberystwyth*

Welsh hymn, arr. Daniel Burton

Postlude The Gartan Mother's Lullabye

trad. Irish, arr. Phil Coulter

Please feel free to depart during or after the Postlude, holding silence.

Flowers and Vigil Candle

The flowers are given to the glory of God and in thanksgiving for the leadership of Catherine Whitham and Kyle Huske, former co-chairs of St. Stephen's Flower Guild, by Carol McCoy. The vigil candle in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit is given in memory of John Dartez.

Participants

Celebrant: The Rev. John Jenkins; **Deacon:** The Rev. Bill Sachs; **Reflector:** Angela DeVaun; **Subdeacon:** Susan Wilkes; **Reader/Intercessor:** Tyler Curtis; **Chalice Bearers:** Guy Frank, Gibboney Huske, Barbara Massey, Mim Oman; **Musicians:** Quinn Bitzas, *cantor*; Susan DeJesus, *flute*; Brent te Velde, *piano*

The Ministry of Healing Prayer at St. Stephen's Church

TO PRESENT YOURSELF FOR HEALING PRAYER OR ANOINTING: Healing ministers are located in both side chapels from the time people receive communion until after the service concludes. Go to either side chapel either after receiving communion or a blessing, or at any time following irrespective of what else is happening in the service. Because these ministries will continue through the end of the service, please respect those in prayer by exiting in silence from any of the rear doors. Whether or not you participate in these ministries tonight, you may contribute to the work of healing prayer by offering your personal prayers for yourself and that all who worship here may experience the healing love of God in their lives and bear that love into the world for its healing.

HEALING PRAYER: If you wish to sit for a moment with a healing prayer minister, it is helpful if you share your name and the concern for which you ask God's healing. The minister will lay hands on your shoulders, join with you in silently opening ourselves to God, and offering your prayer concern to the healing One who is with us always. This is not a ministry of magical incantations. It is simply about fellow pilgrims opening ourselves more completely to God's presence and healing love.

ANOINTING: If you wish to receive anointing with healing oil, approach the anointer with you palms open and extended. She or he will mark your hand with the sign of the cross and offer a simple prayer for your healing.

Healing ministries of prayer and anointing have practiced by Christians from the very beginning. God's grace is freely given to all people for the healing of spirit, mind, and body, and these practices provide ways for us to present ourselves just as we are with open hands and open hearts. We do not believe in magical incantations. Instead, these sacramental acts are simply about fellow pilgrims opening ourselves more completely to the healing love of God.

The Parish Prayer List

The parish prayer list is available in the narthex (the church vestibule) and at Information Central (the large table outside the parish office).

Prayers and blessings adapted from the following sources: The Northumbria Community, *Celtic Daily Prayer: Prayers and Readings from the Northumbria Community*, Harper Collins, © 2002; *Intercessions for the Christian People*, The Liturgical Press, ©1990; *A New Zealand Prayer Book*, Harper Collins, © 1997; Philip Newell, *Celtic Benediction: Morning and Night Prayer*, William B. Eardmans Publishing Company, © 2000; Iona Community, *Iona Community Worship Book*. Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, © 2017; Wild Goose Worship Group, *Big Book of Liturgies*, Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, © 2023. Rite Planning, © 2021, by Church Publishing Incorporated, all rights reserved, used by permission. All copyrighted music by permission, under OneLicense #A710911. Opening: David Whyte, "Start Close In" from *David Whyte, River Flow*, Many Rivers Press, 2012.

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