

Morning Prayer: Rite One
and the 100th Presentation of
St. Stephen's Christmas Pageant



The Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 21, 2025
11:15 a.m.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Richmond, Virginia

This service of Morning Prayer incorporating the youth-led Christmas pageant is an annual tradition at St. Stephen's Church (with occasional interruptions for wars, renovations, and pandemics). Today's is its 100th presentation which means this pageant is more than a century old. In addition to scripture read by young people, carols sung by the congregation, and anthems performed by our choirs, senior high youth don costumes and portray the figures in the stories of the Nativity, proceeding down the center aisle of the nave on rolling carts. Younger children have roles in the pageant's final scene. This cherished retelling has been handed down from generation to generation, and today we thank all who are making it possible today, and remember with gratitude all who did so in the past.



Voluntary *Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele* (Rejoice greatly, O my soul) Johann Gottfried Walther
Hymn 56 O come, O come, Emmanuel (vs. 1-4) *Sung by all, standing as you are able.* *Veni, veni Emmanuel*

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
 2. O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest
 3. O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy
 4. O come, thou Branch of Jes - se's tree, free them from
 cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
 all things might - i - ly; to us the path of know - ledge
 tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the
 Sa - tan's ty - ran - ny that trust thy might - y power to
 here un - til the Son of God ap - pear. Re - joice! Re - joice!
 show, and teach us in her ways to go.
 law, in cloud, and ma - jes - ty and awe.
 save, and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.
 Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - ell

Opening Sentences The Book of Common Prayer, page 37


Officiant Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. *Isaiah 40:3*
 The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. *Isaiah 40:5*

Invitatory Prayer Book, page 42

Officiant O Lord, open thou our lips.
People And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.
All Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Hymn 60 Creator of the stars of night *Sung by all, standing.* *Conditor alme siderum*

1. Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo - ple's ev - er - last - ing light,
 2. In sor - row that the an - cient curse should doom to death a u - ni - verse,
 3. When this old world drew on toward night, you came; but not in splen - dor bright,
 4. At your great Name, O Je - sus, now all knees must bend, all hearts must bow:
 5. Come in your ho - ly might, we pray, re - deem us for e - ter - nal day;
 6. To God the Fa - ther, God the Son, and God the Spi - rit, Three in One,



O Christ, Re-deem - er of us all, we pray you hear us when we call.
 you came, O Sa - vior, to set free your own in glo - rious li - ber - ty.
 not as a mon - arch, but the child of Ma - ry, blame - less mo - ther mild.
 all things on earth with one ac - cord, like those in heav'n, shall call you Lord.
 de - fend us while we dwell be - low from all as - saults of our dread foe.
 praise, hon - or, might, and glo - ry be from age to age e - ter - nal - ly.

The Christmas Pageant

The Bidding Prayer

Reader: Granger Bradshaw

Beloved in Christ, as we await the great festival of Christmas, let us prepare ourselves so that we may be shown its true meaning. Let us hear, in lessons from Holy Scripture, how the prophets of Israel foretold that God would visit and redeem God's waiting people. Let us rejoice, in our carols and hymns, that the good purpose of God is being mightily fulfilled. Let us celebrate the promise that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will bring all people and all things into the glory of God's eternal kingdom. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have Good News brought to them. **Amen.**

Please be seated for the duration of the pageant. You are welcome to join the choir in singing the hymns.

PROPHECY

Lesson: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7; **Reader:** Will Rohrs




THE ANNUNCIATION

Lesson: Luke 1:26-38; **Reader:** Catalina Pechin


Herald: Amy Phillips; **Elizabeth:** Julia Hunter Williams; **Gabriel:** Lucy Phillips; **Mary:** Alice Kidd

Hymn 265 The angel Gabriel from heaven came *Sung by all, seated.*

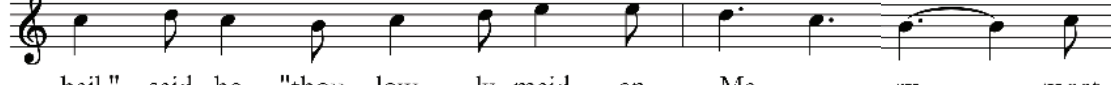
Gabriel's Message




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
 4. Of her, Em-man - u - el, the Christ, was born in



wings as drift - ed snow, his cyes as flame; "All
 gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee, thy
 me be as it pleas - eth God," she said, "my
 Beth - le - hem, all on a Christ - mas morn, and



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
 Chris - tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say: "Most



high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - - ri - al!
 high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - - ri - al!
 high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - - ri - al!
 high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - - ri - al!



THE SHEPHERDS

Lesson: Luke 2:8-20; **Reader:** Tom Rohrs

Herald: Tabby Johnson; **Prophecy Angels:** Eliza Hershey, Neely Oakey; **Shepherds:** Lee Driscoll, Dalton Mika

Hymn 94

While shepherds watched their flocks

Sung by all, seated.

Winchester Old



1. While shep - herds watched their flocks by night, all
 2. "Fear not," said he, for might - y dread had
 3. "To you, in Da - vid's town, this day is
 4. The heaven - ly Babe you there shall find to
 5. Thus spake the ser - aph, and forth - with ap -
 6. "All glo - ry be to God on high and



seat - ed on the ground, the an - gel of the
 seized their trou - bled mind; "Glad tid - ings of great
 born of Da - vid's line the Sa - vior, who is
 hu - man view dis - played, all mean - ly wrapped in
 peared a shin - ing throng of an - gels prais - ing
 on the earth be peace; good will hence - forth from



Lord came down, and glo - ry shone a - round.
 joy I bring to you and all man - kind.
 Christ the Lord; and this shall be the sign:
 swath - ing bands, and in a man - ger laid."
 God, who thus ad - dressed their joy - ful song:
 heav'n to all be - gin and ne - ver cease."



HEROD & SCRIBES

Lesson: Matthew 2:1-8; **Reader:** Granger Bradshaw

Herald: Betsy Proutt; **Herod:** Wyatt Hobbs; **Scribes:** Charles Oakey, Lowndes Peple

Choir: A Stable Lamp is Lighted (music arr. Michael Simpson)



THE WISE MEN

Lesson: Matthew 2:9-12; **Reader:** Will Rohrs

Herald: Sadie Kidd; **Magi:** Parker Birdsey, Betsy Spalding, Holt Williams

Hymn 115

What child is this?

Sung by all, seated.

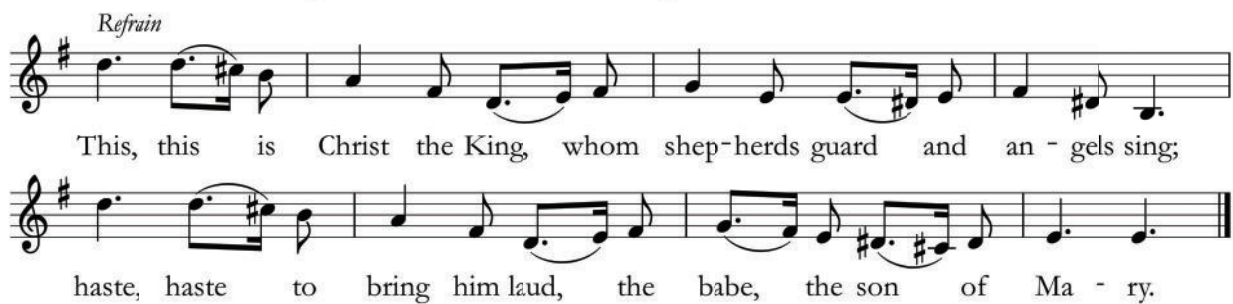
Greensleeves



1. What child is this, who, laid to rest, on
 2. Why lies he in such mean es - tate where
 3. So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh, come,



Ma - ry's lap is sleep - ing? Whom an - gels greet with
 ox and ass are feed - ing? Good Chris - tian, fear: for
 peas - ant, king, to own him; the King of kings sal -



THE NATIVITY

Lesson: John 1:1-5, 9-14; **Reader:** Rose Blackburn

Herald: Reagan Ayers; **Mary:** Anna Rohrs; **Joseph:** Robert Proutt; **Angel:** Rosie Ferrell

Cherubs: Elouise Oakey, Walker Turner

Animals and Stars: Hollis Bracey, Maisie Champion, Conley Del Bueno, Elliott Hodge, William Jackson, Betsy Jamerson, George Jamerson, Hayes Joyner, Elizabeth Lewis, Katherine Lewis, William McCorey, Henry Moore, Teddy Ould, Gibbs Peple, Charlie Russell, Deuce Walter, Milly Walter, Elizabeth Zalesiak

Hymn 79

O little town of Bethlehem

Sung by all, seated.

St. Louis



1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie! A - bove thy deep and
2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry; and gath - ered all a - bove, while mor - tals sleep, the
3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given! So God im - parts to
4. Where child - ren pure and hap - py pray to the bless - ed Child, where mis - er - y cries
5. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray; cast out our sin and



dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by; yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the
an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love. O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro -
hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven. No ear may hear his com - ing, but
out to thee, Son of the mo - ther mild; where char - i - ty stands watch - ing and
en - ter in, be born in us to - day. We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the



ev - er - last - ing Light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
claim the ho - ly birth! and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.
in this world of sin, where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
faith holds wide the door, the dark night wakes, the glo - ry breaks, and Christ - mas comes once more.
great glad ti - dings tell; O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

1. A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord
 2. The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord

Je - sus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the bright sky looked
 Je - sus no cry - ing he makes. I love thee, Lord Je - sus! Look

down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep in the hay.
 down from the sky, and stay by my side un - til morn - ing is night.

The Closing Prayer**Reader:** Tom Rohrs

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Retiring Procession of the Pageant**Hymn 102**

Once in royal David's city

Sung by all, seated.

Irby

1. Once in roy - al Da - vid's ci - ty stood a low - ly cat - tle
 2. He came down to earth from hea - ven, who is God and Lord of
 3. We, like Ma - ry, rest con - found - ed that a sta - ble should dis -
 4. For he is our life - long pat - tern; dai - ly, when on earth he
 5. And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing
 6. Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing

shed, where a mo - ther laid her ba - by in a
 all, and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his
 play hea - ven's Word, the world's cre - a - tor, cra - dled
 grew, he was tempt - ed, scorned, re - ject - ed, tears and
 love; for that child who seemed so help - less is our
 round, we shall see him; but in hea - ven, where his

man - ger for his bed: Ma - ry was that mo - ther
 cra - dle was a stall; with the poor, the scorned, the
 there on Christ - mas Day, yet this child, our Lord and
 smiles like us he knew. Thus he feels for all our
 Lord in heav'n a - bove; and he leads his chil - dren
 saints his throne sur - round: Christ, re - vealed to faith - ful

mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
 low - ly, lived on earth our Sa - vior ho - ly.
 bro - ther, brought us love for one an - oth - er.
 sad - ness, and he shares in all our glad - ness.
 on to the place where he is gone.
 eye, set at God's right hand on high.

The Prayers

Prayer Book, page 54

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People **And with thy spirit.**

Officiant Let us pray. *Please kneel as you are able.*

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.

Suffrages B *Officiant and People read responsively.* Prayer Book, page 55

O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage;

Govern them and lift them up forever.

Day by day we magnify thee;

And we worship thy Name ever, world without end.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin;

O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.

O Lord, let thy mercy be upon us;

As our trust is in thee.

O Lord, in thee have I trusted;

Let me never be confounded.

The Collect of the Day

Prayer Book, page 160

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People **And with thy spirit.**

Officiant Let us pray. *Silence is kept.*

We beseech thee, Almighty God, to purify our consciences by thy daily visitation, that when thy Son our Lord cometh he may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Welcome and Announcements *Please sit.*

All comes from God, so from what God has given, we offer gifts as we participate in God's work in the world.

You may offer your gift online using the QR code or texting STSTEPHENSVA to 73256, or in an offering plate.



John Wood

At the Offertory Magnificat in G major *Sung by the choir.*

For text, see the Prayer Book, page 50.

At the Presentation *Sung by all, standing.*

Winchester New

The fruits of our labor are presented to God, along with gifts for our food ministry.



The General Thanksgiving

Prayer Book, page 54

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People **And with thy spirit.**

Officiant Let us pray. *Please kneel as you are able.*

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks
for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men.
We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;**

but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies,
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful;
and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to thy service,
and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost,
be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

Hymn People, look East

Sung by all, standing.

Besançon



1. Peo - ple, look East. The time is near of the crow-ning of__ the year.
2. Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is plan - ted there:
3. Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled.
4. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim,
5. An - gels, an - nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who brings new life__ to earth.



Make your house fair as you are a - ble, trim__ the hearth and set__ the ta - ble.
give up your strength the seed to nour-ish, that__ in course the flow'r may flour-ish.
E - ven the hour when wings are fro - zen God__ for fled - ging time__ has cho - sen.
shin-ing be - yond the fros - ty wea-ther, bright as sun__ and moon to - ge - ther.
Set ev' - ry peak and val - ley hum-ming with__ the word, the Lord is co - ming.



Peo-ple, look East and sing to - day: Love, the guest, is on__ the way.
Peo-ple, look East and sing to - day: Love, the rose, is on__ the way.
Peo-ple, look East and sing to - day: Love, the bird, is on__ the way.
Peo-ple, look East and sing to - day: Love, the star, is on__ the way.
Peo-ple, look East and sing to - day: Love, the Lord, is on__ the way.

Officiant Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Officiant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

Voluntary Toccata on *Veni Emmanuel*

Adolphus Hailstork



Memorials

The flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of Rebecca Holcomb Dickinson by Dr. and Mrs. Richard M. Clary and family; Mary Pearson Moore and Thomas Justin Moore, Jr., Carolyn and Howard McCue, Mary and Rives Fleming, Jr. and Jeannette Bray Moore by their family; and John W. Tadlock by his family. The vigil candle in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit is given in memory of the Rev. D. Donald Dunn III.

Participants | OFFICIANT: The Rev. John D. Rohrs; ASSISTING CLERGY: The Rev. Judy Webb Davis, the Rev. William S. Stanley; MUSICIANS: St. Stephen's Choristers, members of St. Stephen's Choir, Chris Edwards, *director*; Diana Chou, *organ*; VERGER: Kathy Brock; ACOLYTES: Henry Mulholland, Abigail Moore, Carter Spalding; WAGONEERS: Riley Ayers, Jay Driscoll, Caroline Farley, McGill Ferrell, Isabella Irani, Caroline Kocher, Blake Moorman, Quinn Moorman, Thomas Oakey, Robert Peple, Ford Prouitt, George Van Der Hyde, Lola Van Der Hyde, Archer Williams

Cover: *Adoration of the Magi*. Wood engraving by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (German painter, 1794-1872), published 1860. Public Domain.