



The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 21, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Holy Eucharist: Rite Two

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church & Richmond, Virginia

Welcome to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. We are glad you are here. We welcome and include all people without exception and we extend a special greeting to any visitors. Throughout this bulletin, helpful guidance is printed in italics. Visitor guides are found in racks at the entrance doors. When you wish to be known here, please fill out a welcome card (found in each pew or online); you may drop the card into the offering plate as it is passed. Children are very welcome in this service, and child care is also available for infants and children through age four in our nursery on the lower level near the main parking lot entrance; greeters are happy to guide you. The church is open for prayer from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Thursday. We hope to see you again soon!

Voluntary *Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele* (Rejoice greatly, O my soul)

Johann Gottfried Walther

The Word of God

Hymn 265 The angel Gabriel from heaven came

Gabriel's Message

Sung by all, standing as you are able. All hymns are found in The Hymnal 1982, the blue book in your pew rack.

Opening Acclamation

Enriching Our Worship 1, page 50

Celebrant Blessed are you, holy and living One.

People **You come to your people and set them free.**

The Collect for Purity

Said by all.

Prayer Book, page 355

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Kyrie

Sung by all, standing.

William Traftka

All: Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, Ky-ri-e e-lei-son,

Ky-ri-e e-lei-son. Cantor or choir sings "Christe eleison."

All: Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, Ky-ri-e, Ky-ri-e e-lei-son.

Translation: Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

The Collect of the Day

Prayer Book, page 212

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray. *A period of silence is kept.*

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lesson Isaiah 7:10-16 *Please sit.*
Reader A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the LORD himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

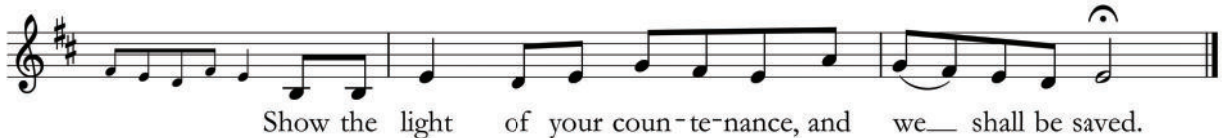
Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.** *A period of silence is kept.*

Psalms 80:1-7, 16-18

Prayer Book, page 702; antiphon: Brent te Velde; chant: Plainsong, Tone IV

The antiphon will be sung once by the choir, then repeated by all. The verses will be sung by the choir.



- 1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
- 2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
stir up your strength and come to help us.
- 3 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. *Antiphon*
- 4 O LORD God of hosts, *
how long will you be angered
despite the prayers of your people?
- 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
- 6 You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
- 7 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. *Antiphon*
- 16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.
- 17 And so will we never turn away from you; *
give us life, that we may call upon your Name.
- 18 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. *Antiphon*
A period of silence is kept.

Hymn 56, vs. 7, 8 O come, O come, Emmanuel *Sung by all, standing.* *Veni, veni, Emmanuel*

The Gospel Matthew 11:2-11 *Please remain standing and face the reader of the Gospel.*

Deacon 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:

“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.

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Sermon The Rev. William S. Stanley

The Nicene Creed *Said by all, standing.*

Prayer Book, page 358

**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

Celebrant Let us pray for the church and the world.

*You may stand or kneel. In the silence following each petition, please offer your own prayers,
silently or aloud.*

*Leader We bring to God our gratitude for all that is lovely, gracious, and true, [especially ____].
Silence.*

*Celebrant Lord in your mercy.
All **Hear our prayer.***

*Leader We bring to God someone whom we have met or remembered today and for whom
we want to pray.
Silence.*

*Celebrant Lord in your mercy.
All **Hear our prayer.***

*Leader We bring to God someone who is hurting today and needs our prayer.
Silence.*

*Celebrant Lord in your mercy.
All **Hear our prayer.***

*Leader We bring to God a troubled situation in our world today, especially the suffering in the Middle East,
Eastern Europe, and all places of conflict.
Silence.*

Celebrant Lord in your mercy.

All **Hear our prayer.**

Leader We bring to God someone whom we find hard to forgive or trust.

Silence.

Celebrant Lord in your mercy.

All **Hear our prayer.**

Leader We bring to God those who have died, [especially _____,] and all who grieve.

Silence.

Celebrant Lord in your mercy.

All **Hear our prayer.**

Leader We bring ourselves to God,

All **that we might be healed
and drawn to love each other
as God loves us. Amen.**

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

A period of silence is kept.

All **Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Celebrant Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Peace *Please stand.*

Prayer Book, page 360

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The Ministers and People greet one another in the name of the Lord. After exchanging the Peace, please be seated.

Welcome and Announcements

The Holy Communion

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 in an offering plate as they come by or make a gift online by scanning the QR code or texting STSTEPHENSRYA to 73256.



At the Offertory Magnificat (Mt. St. Alban's service)

Sung by the choir.

music: David Hogan

For text, see "The Song of Mary" in the Prayer Book, page 50.

At the Presentation

Sung by all, standing as able.

Winchester New

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



The Great Thanksgiving Eucharistic Prayer C

*The people remain standing, as able. The congregational responses are in **bold type**.*

Celebrant God be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God of all power, Source and Sustainer of the Universe, you are worthy of glory and praise.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

At your command all things came to be: shining light and enfolding dark; the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

By your will they were created and have their being.

From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with the capacity for memory, reason, and skill. You made us the stewards of your creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust; and we turned against one another.

Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight.

Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your eternal Word, born of your servant Mary, to fulfill your Law, opening for us the way of freedom and peace.

By his blood, he reconciled us. By his wounds, we are healed.

And therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn:

Sanctus

Sung by all.

William Trafka



You may stand or kneel.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, for sending us Jesus, the Christ, who on the night he was handed over to suffering and death, took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper, Jesus took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Remembering now his work of redemption, and offering to you this sacrifice of thanksgiving,

We celebrate Christ's death and resurrection as we await the day of his coming.

Therefore, O God, we who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Sanctify us also, and let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.

Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the Bread.

God of our ancestors; Redeemer and Mother of Israel; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only and not for strength; for pardon only and not for renewal. Accept these prayers and praises, Almighty God, through Jesus Christ our great High Priest, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, your Church gives honor, glory, and worship, from generation to generation. **AMEN.**

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.**

The Breaking of the Bread *The Celebrant breaks the consecrated bread.
A period of silence is kept.*

William Trafka

The musical score is written for a Cantor and an All group. It consists of four staves of music in a key with three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature. The first staff is for the Cantor, with a 4-measure rest at the end. The second staff is for the All group, with a 4-measure rest at the end. The third staff is for the All group, with a 4-measure rest at the end. The fourth staff is for the All group, with a 2-measure rest at the end. The lyrics are: Cantor: Je - sus, Lamb of God, have mer-cy on us. Jesus, bear - er of our sins, have mercy on us. Je-sus, Re - deem-er, Re-deemer of the world, All: Do-na no - bis pa - cem, do-na no - bis pa - cem, do - na no - bis pa - cem.

Cantor: Je - sus, Lamb of God, have mer-cy on us.

Jesus, bear - er of our sins, have mercy on us. Je-sus, Re - deem-er, 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.

Celebrant

The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

At the Communion of the People

All are welcome at the altar in this place. Communion is distributed at the chancel steps and in both side chapels. The altar also extends to your pew if you need us to bring the sacrament to you; just let an usher know. To receive Communion, cross one hand over the other, palms up. You may consume the bread and then drink from the wine in the larger chalice. If you prefer to "intinct" or touch the edge of your bread to the wine, please use one of the smaller cups, available at all stations. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. If you prefer to receive a blessing, cross your arms against your chest.

Music at Communion

Anthem *O magnum mysterium*

O magnum mysterium

et admirabile sacramentum,

ut animalia viderent Dominum natum

jacentem in praesepe.

O beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt

portare Dominum Jesum Christum.

Alleluia!

Sung by the choir.

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Translation: O great mystery

and wonderful sacrament,

that animals should see the new-born Lord

lying in a manger!

O blessed is the Virgin, whose womb

was worthy to bear Christ the Lord.

Alleluia!

Hymn 268 Ye who claim the faith of Jesus

Sung by all, seated.

Julion

After Communion, the Celebrant says

Let us pray. *You may stand or kneel.*

All

Lord Jesus Christ,

you have put your life into our hands;

now we put our lives into yours.

Take us, renew us and remake us.

What we have been is past;

what we shall be, through you,

still awaits us.

Lead us on.

Take us with you. Amen.

The Blessing *The Celebrant pronounces God's blessing.*

Hymn 438 Tell out, my soul

Sung by all, standing.

Woodlands

Dismissal

Prayer Book, page 366

Deacon Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God.**

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

CELEBRANT: The Rev. Judy Webb Davis; DEACON: The Rev. John D. Rohrs; SUBDEACON: Pat Githens; READER/INTERCESSOR: Beth Crews; PREACHER: The Rev. William S. Stanley; ASSISTING PRIEST: The Rev. William L. Sachs; CHALICE BEARERS: Dave Davis, Barbara Massey, Laurie Rogers, Deborah Waters; ACOLYTES: Andrew Everett, Abigail Moore; MUSICIANS: St. Stephen's Choir, Chris Edwards, *director*; Diana Chou, *organ*; VERGER: Penn Rogers

The Parish Prayer List

Leilani Allwine, Patricia Atkins-Smith, Sue Atkinson, Robert Baker, Elizabeth Bannerman, Lash Barksdale, Nancy Beale, *Linda Bennett*, Ken Blaisdell, Christine Boeteger, Genie Borum, Julia Bouck, Gene Bowles, Sturges Brian, Leslie Brockman, Alex H. Brown, Pat Brown, Sarah Jo Bryce, Turner Bruneau, Matt Boyd, Patti Bullen, Tammy Carleton, Scott Carnohan, Paula Chambers, *Michael Click*, Nancy Cole, Sarah Cole, Susan Collier, Mary Cooke, Prior Cooper, Kathy Conrad, John Corey, Don Cowles, Michelle Crim, the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry, *Debbie Cuseo*, Chris Davis, Patricia Delany, Jackie Dering, Ham DeRosa, Terry Dickinson, Davis Dunn Dillard, Susan Dull, Guy Frank, April Greenwood, Janis Hall, Rodger Hardy, Katie Hellebush, Dan Hill, Anna Hurdle, Alan Jamesieson, Lena Jones, Justin Jones-Nickerson, Jane Kelly, Dana King, Linda Lewis, Genie Lucyk, Joy Luke, Margaret Lyle, Pam Lynch, Ross Mackenzie, Barbara Mathison, Satin Matthews, Adrienne Maxwell, Michael McCabe, Schnucki McCabe, Morgan McCall, Stratton and Robin McCrady, Gertrude McLean, Nancy Meath, Jack Miller, Mary Miller, B. Millner, Susan Minyard, Sallie Moncol, *Carolyn Mae Morgan*, Ashley Nickerson, Mary Beth Noel, Sallie Nolte, Jan Orgain, Tricia Payne, Beth Pearce, Ernest Perry, Courtney Phillips, Scott Pittman, Lyn Presson, *Alma Price*, Luke Robertson, Ramona Ransone, Jason R., Ray, Jennifer Reed, Aleta Richards, Ryan Rohadfox, Kaley Rosenthal, Robert Sass, James Saunders and Harriet Covey, Melissa Schick, T. Logan Scott, Todd Shelton, Bette Shiflett, Maj. David Shuford, Jr., Chrys Sills, Aiden Thomas Smith, Regena Stith, Margaret Thompson, Kenneth Valke, Timothy W., Ozzie Wade, Suzanne Wallace, Tom White, Terri Wilcox, Donna Williams, Steve Williams, Martha Wilson, Claire Wood, Emily H. Wood, Rosalyn Wootten, Sue Wootton, Young, Margaret P. Young. **For the blessings of this life**, especially *the birth of Murphy McCabe Williams to Guy and Elizabeth Williams*. **For those who have died**, especially *V. Cassel Adamson, Jr. and Ida Hall*. **For those expecting a child**, especially Maddie and Matthew Clites, Ian Hayes and Corinne Torres, Preston and Cate Kendig, and Michelle and Dane Olsson. **For our missionaries**, Heidi Schmidt and Monica Vega, and the people they serve in Argentina. **In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer**, we pray for the *Anglican Church of Burundi*. **For ReWork Richmond**. **For an end to gun violence**. **For peace and reconciliation** in Haiti, Iraq, Iran, Israel/Palestine, Nigeria, North Korea, South Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine, and at our borders. **For those serving overseas in the military or diplomatic service**: CPT Anna Broadbent-Evelyn, Lt. Jonathan Dean Hudson, and Lt. Alex Whitmire.

Names in italics were added to the prayer list this week.

In order to keep our prayer list current and facilitate the intentionality and mindfulness with which we pray, we print names on the list for three months or less. If you would like for someone to remain on the list for more (or less) time, please call the office or email Kitty Ball at kball@ststephensRVA.org.