



Palmer Hall Chapel

Sunday, December 21, 2025 at 9 a.m. ☩ The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Holy Eucharist: Rite Two

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church ☩ Richmond, Virginia

Welcome to the Palmer Hall service

We are delighted you are here. Wherever you might be on your faith journey, we hope your experience here will strengthen and affirm you. We are sure that your presence among us today strengthens others, and we welcome you to join in everything that St. Stephen's offers. Every Sunday, we offer several different services of worship (at 8, 9 and 11:15 a.m., and 5:30 and 8 p.m.), each with its own character. At 9 a.m., two services are happening simultaneously—one in the main church, and this one which takes place in Palmer Hall Chapel.

The Palmer Hall service for some feels especially welcoming to families, particularly those with babies and children. Both of the 9 a.m. services—this one, and the one in the main church—include important roles for children, and people of all ages are welcome at any service. In Palmer Hall, our worship space includes a “soft space.” This is an area with a rug, floor cushions, and children's books where children can move a bit more freely and comfortably than they can in rows of seating. Please accompany your child to the soft space if and when they want to visit it; this helps us ensure the safety and comfort of our whole community.

Both of the 9 a.m. services include Holy Eucharist. All are welcome at the altar in this place. To receive Communion, place your hands together, palms up. You may consume the bread and then drink from the wine in the larger chalice. If you prefer to intinct, touching the edge of the bread to the wine, please use one of the smaller cups. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. If you prefer to receive a blessing, cross your arms on the front of your chest. Children who have been baptized are welcome to receive communion. The important thing is that you know God welcomes you and that this church welcomes you. Please come back often.

Prelude

Welcome

The Word of God

Opening Hymn

Light one candle, vs. 1-4

Sung by all, standing.

Natalie Sleeth

1. Light one can - dle for hope, one bright can - dle for hope,
2. Light one can - dle for peace, one bright can - dle for peace,
3. Light one can - dle for joy, one bright can - dle for joy,
4. Light one can - dle for love, one bright can - dle for love,

He brings hope to ev - 'ry heart, He comes! He comes!
He brings peace to ev - 'ry heart, He comes! He comes!
He brings joy to ev - 'ry heart, He comes! He comes!
He brings love to ev - 'ry heart, He comes! He comes!

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Leader Restore us, O Lord God of hosts. Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. Stir up your strength and come to help us.

Deacon People of God: Keep watch! The promises of old are made new in every generation. Among you comes the kingdom for which you yearn, for you are God's children.

People **Lord, make us one in the love of Christ today and for ever. Amen.**

The Collect of the Day

Prayer Book, page 212

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray. *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.**

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18 *Said responsively by whole verse, seated.*

Prayer Book, page 702

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.

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.

16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.

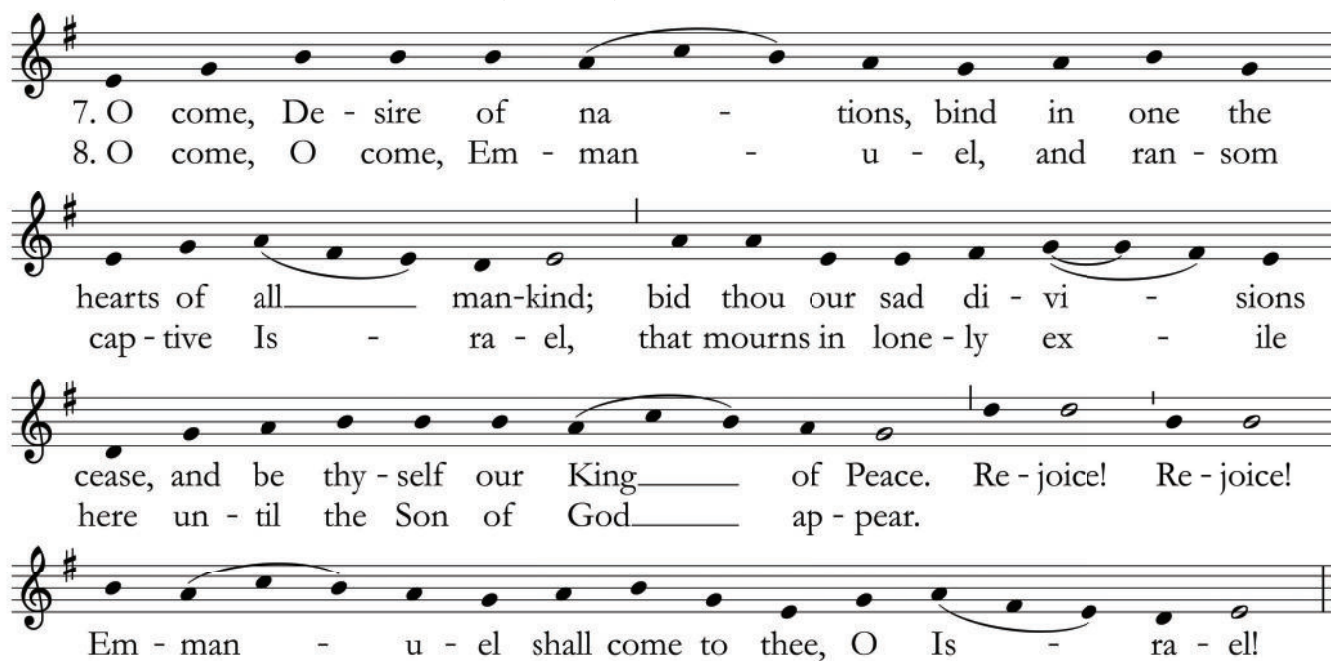
17 And so will we never turn away from you; *
give us life, that we may call upon your Name.

18 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

The Gospel Song *Sung by all, standing.*

Hymn 56 O come, O come Emmanuel (vs. 7 & 8)

Veni, veni, Emmanuel



7. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind in one the
8. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
hearts of all man-kind; bid thou our sad di - vi - sions
cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
cease, and be thy - self our King of Peace. Re - joice! Re - joice!
here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

The Gospel Matthew 1:18-25

Reader 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.

Reader The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Wondering The Rev. Cate Anthony

The children are invited to gather on the center rug.

The Creed *Said by all, standing.*

I believe in God above,
I believe in Jesus' love.
I believe God's Spirit too,
comes to tell me what to do.

I believe that I can be
kind and good,
dear Lord, like thee.

The Prayers of the People *Please remain standing.*

We give thanks for what is good and pray for the Church, the world and our local community, the sick, those who need our prayers, and those who have died.

Leader In patience and in hope let us offer our prayers to God, saying with one voice: we rejoice with joy and singing

People **for the coming of the Lord is near.**

Leader For all who walk in God's Holy Way: those in the pews and in the pulpits; those at home and on the streets; for all who ponder God's promise in their hearts, and all who carry the good news into the world, we rejoice with joy and singing

People **for the coming of the Lord is near.**

Leader For the nations and their leaders: that eyes may be opened and ears unstopped, and that peace and justice break forth in every land. We pray especially for those in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and all places of conflict. We rejoice with joy and singing

People **for the coming of the Lord is near.**

Leader For all the world: heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them. For the early and the late rains, and the precious crop from the earth. For the gathering darkness and the light of hope. We rejoice with joy and singing

People **for the coming of the Lord is near.**

Leader For this community and all who live in it, each member of the whole body. Strengthen our hearts, dear God, that our joy may be complete in you. [We pray especially for _____.] We rejoice with joy and singing

People **for the coming of the Lord is near.**

Leader For all who are nearest to you, O God: the lonely, the out-of-work, the sick, the fearful, the cold, and the hungry. For the one who is sorry, and the one who is ashamed. It is you, our God of hope, who sets all prisoners free. We rejoice with joy and singing

People **for the coming of the Lord is near.**

Leader For all the departed [especially _____], and all who remember, we rejoice with joy and singing

People **for the coming of the Lord is near.**

Leader We are waiting, O God, with all the patience we can muster. Beloved of angels and archangels, Lover of saints and sinners, God our Savior, to you alone we pray.

People **Amen.**

The Peace

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.

Announcements

The Holy Communion

Offertory Sentence

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:2

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 (use the QR code, or text STSTEPHENSRYA to 73256), or in the offering plates as they come by.



Offertory music

At the Presentation

Sung by all, standing.

Old 100th

Musical notation for the offertory song. It consists of two staves in G major (one sharp). The melody is simple, using quarter and half notes. The lyrics are: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye heav'n - ly host: praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

The children are invited to follow the ushers forward to sit on the rug in front of the altar for the Great Thanksgiving.

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayers, Sam Wells and Abby Kocher, p. 58

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Celebrant

It is a good and joyful thing to give our thanks to you, Lord God of hosts, O ancient of days, for from of old you have called forth life. You brought into being every detail of creation and gave birth to your covenant people. When the time drew near, you called upon Bethlehem to bear the hope you promised, and summoned Mary to bear your holy child. By your grace the child grew to be the one to bear not only our sins but the sins of the world. In his dying and rising you gave birth to everlasting life for all your children. And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we sing your praise and join the unending hymn:

Sanctus

Sung by all.

Land of Rest

Musical notation for the Sanctus. It consists of four staves in B-flat major (two flats). The melody is simple, using quarter, eighth, and half notes. The lyrics are: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might, heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry, Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est, Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Celebrant

God of Mary, whose womb bore the sacred fruit of our salvation, bring forth from this fruit of the vine your cup of blessing. As we remember around this table your Son's saving passion poured out for us, send your Holy Spirit upon your church to make us bearers of your Christ, your mercy, and your hope. Sanctify this bread and cup that they may be for us the body and blood of Jesus our Lord; who, at supper with his disciples, took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying, 'Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' After supper he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." Great is the mystery of faith.

All **Christ has died.**
 Christ is risen.
 Christ will come again.

Celebrant

God of holy expectation, let your face shine upon us and your dawn break upon us that we may be saved. Make your church expectant in faith as we labor for what we cannot yet see. Come and dwell with your people who yearn to be restored, to be forgiven, to belong. Let the warmth of your face shine upon those who seek the peace long promised for Bethlehem and all your waiting world. Bring us, with the saints who have looked for your coming, to the day when we and all your children shall celebrate in your holy presence, one God, Father, Son, and holy Spirit,

All **AMEN.**

Celebrant And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Celebrant and People


Prayer Book, page 364


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.

Mason Martens

Cantor 
Al - le - lu - ia. Christ our Pass - o - ver is sac - ri - ficed for us;

All 
There-fore let us keep the feast. Al - le - lu - ia.

The Invitation

Celebrant

The gifts of God for the people of God.

At the Communion of the People

Communion will be served at two stations, standing. All are welcome to come forward. To receive Communion, place your hands together, palms up. If you would like a gluten-free wafer, please tell the minister. If you prefer a blessing, please cross your arms on the front of your chest.

After Communion, the Celebrant says

Let us pray. Please stand.

**All Loving God,
we give you thanks
for restoring us in your image
and nourishing us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.
Now send us forth
a people, forgiven, healed, renewed;
that we may proclaim your love to the world
and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

The Blessing Song Go Now in Peace Sung by all, standing.
**Go now in peace, go now in peace.
May the love of God surround you,
everywhere, everywhere you may go.**

Natalie Sleeth

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

Gabriel's Message

Dismissal

Prayer Book, page 366

**Deacon Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
People Thanks be to God.**

Postlude



Participants

CELEBRANT: The Rev. Cate Anthony

DEACON: The Rev. Abby Kocher

MUSICIAN: Judy Fiske, *piano*

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.

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