

**THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT
HOLY EUCHARIST: RITE TWO
DECEMBER 17, 2023 ■ 10:30 A.M.**



Welcome to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

St. Stephen's is a community of people made more complete by the grace of a perfect God, who proclaim the Gospel by sharing the reconciling love of Christ with others through redeeming acts of hospitality, forgiveness, justice, and peace.

ORDER OF SERVICE

VOLUNTARY

HYMN 53

Once he came in blessing

(Please stand as you are able.)

Officiant: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People: **And blessed be His kingdom, now and forever. Amen**

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.

SONG OF PRAISE S100

Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and Might - y, Ho - ly Im -
mor - tal One, Have mer - cy up - on us. Ho - ly God,
Ho - ly and Might - y, Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have mer - cy
up - on us. Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and Might - y,
Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have mer - cy up - on us.

Setting: From *New Plainsong*; David Hurd (b. 1950)

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Let us pray.

(Please stand or kneel as you are able.)

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LESSONS *(Please be seated.)*

The First Reading: *Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11*

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
For I the Lord love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;

for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 126 *In convertendo*

(Please stand as you are able. The psalm will be read responsively by whole verse.)

1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, *
then were we like those who dream.

**2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, *
and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

3 Then they said among the nations, *
“The Lord has done great things for them.”

**4 The Lord has done great things for us, *
and we are glad indeed.**

5 Restore our fortunes, O Lord, *
like the watercourses of the Negev.

**6 Those who sowed with tears *
will reap with songs of joy.**

7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, *
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the
beginning is now and will be forever. Amen.**

The Second Reading: *1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 (Please be seated.)*

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HYMN 68

Rejoice! Rejoice believers

(Please stand as you are able.)

The Gospel: *John 1:6-8,19-28 (Please stand.)*

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

THE SERMON

The Rev. David Wyly

THE NICENE CREED *(All stand.)*

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 — THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

(Please kneel as you are able.)

With our minds and hearts attuned to the Advent of our Saviour's birth, let us pray to the Father, saying,

Lord, have mercy.

For our own rebirth, let us pray that we may be open to receive the gift of Your unconditional love. May we rejoice as Mary rejoiced at being God's chosen one to bear his son.

Lord, have mercy.

For peace and joy in the world, we pray that we come to understand God's will in our own lives. In receiving the gift of God's son, may we, like Mary and Joseph, be as willing to offer ourselves to You. Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy.

For this city of Goldsboro, may those who live here cultivate a right spirit of community and understand each other's joy and pain. Let us pray to the Father, who sent his son to reconcile us to himself.

Lord, have mercy.

For the joy that comes when a child is born, let us pray. May each and every child experience the promise of a future and know that God has a plan and purpose for them.

Lord, have mercy.

For the good, rich earth that God has given us and which sustains life. May we have the wisdom and foresight to care for it. Help us to serve you and all people as worthy stewards of your bounty. Let us pray to the Creator.

Lord, have mercy.

As we prepare food to celebrate your son's birth, may we remember to also provide for those who don't have enough to eat. May we remember the gifts of the Magi, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and offer our entire being, heart, head, and hands, to Jesus. Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy.

May God's purpose be fulfilled through us. Let us pray to our heavenly Father.

Lord, have mercy.

Just as your star led the magi to Bethlehem, may the path be lit for us. Help us to be open to your guidance. May we proclaim the greatness of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Like Mary, may our spirits rejoice. Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy.

With grateful hearts, we remember the example of Joseph whose leadership, strength, and courage protected his family from harm. May we be bold in our efforts to protect those among us who are most vulnerable. Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy.

In the communion of St. Stephens Episcopal Church and with all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, to Christ, our God.

To thee, O Lord, our God, we pray.

(Silence)

(The Celebrant may add a concluding Collect.)

Amen.

CONFESSION OF SIN

**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.**

THE PEACE

(Please stand as you are able.)

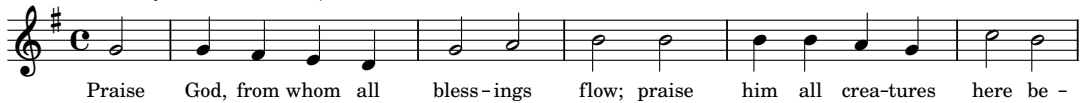
Celebrant: The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

OFFERTORY

AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERINGS

(Please stand as you are able.)



THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Great Thanksgiving (Eucharistic Prayer A)

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.

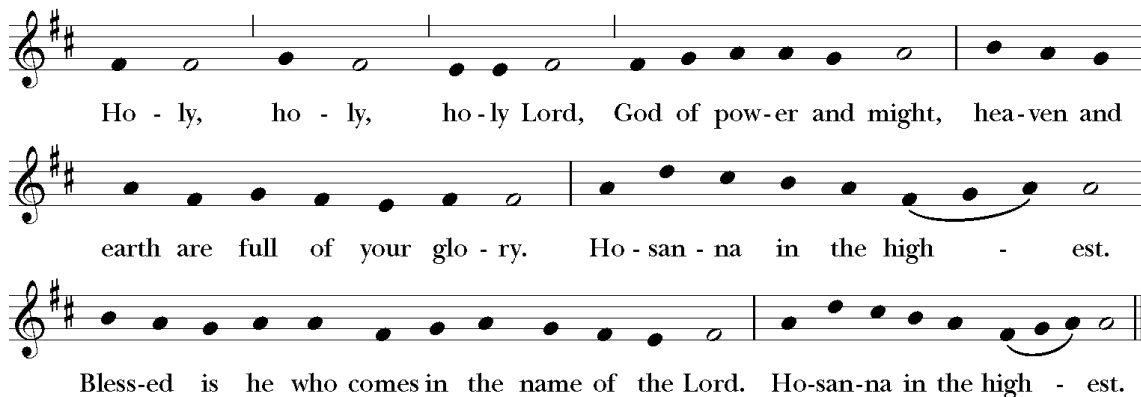
People: **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. *(Here a Proper Preface is added.)*

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Celebrant and People:

Sanctus S124



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might, hea-ven and
earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high - est.

The people stand or kneel.

Then the Celebrant continues:

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "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. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Celebrant and People:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

The Celebrant continues:

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever.
Amen.

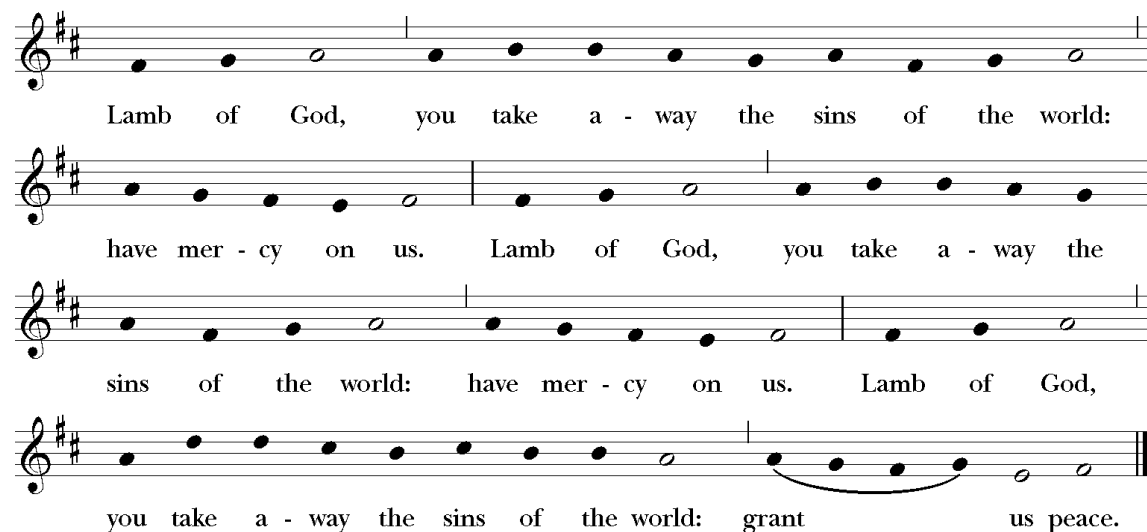
And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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.

FRACTION ANTHEM S161



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world:
have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sins of the world: have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Facing the people, the Celebrant says the following Invitation:

The Gifts of God for the People of God

All baptized Christians, regardless of denomination or age, are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Please come forward at the appropriate time. You may receive both the bread and wine, one or the other, come forward for a blessing, or remain seated.

HYMN 60

Creator of the stars of night

THE POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.

(Please kneel as you are able.)

Celebrant and People

**Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you**

**with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SENDING OF EUCHARISTIC VISITORS

THE BLESSING

HYMN 73 *The king shall come when morning dawns*
(Please stand as you are able.)

THE DISMISSAL

The Deacon, or the Celebrant, dismisses them with these words

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

VOLUNTARY

SERVING TODAY

Celebrant: The Rev. David Wyly

Organist: Patrick Ritsch

Ushers: Martie & Mike Saylor

Eucharistic Visitors: Davis & Kathy Harris

Live Stream Technician: James Ruggles

The flowers on the altar are given to the glory of God and in thanksgiving for Ellie's 12th birthday on December 12 by Beth and Kyle Saylor.

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WELCOME TO ST. STEPHEN'S!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

Phone Numbers: Home _____ Cell _____

I am new to the parish, I would like the Clergy to call.

I am interested in _____ ministry.

Marital Status: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Anniversary Date: _____

Baptism Date and Location: _____

Confirmation Date and Location: _____

Please list the people who reside with you and their ages:

Any additional information you wish to include?

Please tear off this sheet with your information entered and place in the offering plate or give to an usher or greeter. Thank you! We look forward to meeting you!



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

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CLERGY

The Rt. Rev. Robert Skirving, Bishop

The Rev. David Wylly

Rector@ststephenschurch.com

CHURCH STAFF

Organist and Choirmaster: Patrick Ritsch

organist@ststephenschurch.com

Church Administrative Assistant: Vicky Bailey

admin@ststephenschurch.com

Communications Coordinator: Jane Cunningham

cunninghamjane04@gmail.com

Church Sexton: Alfie Barnes

VESTRY

Senior Warden: Katherine MacDonald, Junior Warden: Betty Duncan,

Treasurer: Bob Cagle, Clerk: Nancy Headen

Other Vestry Members Include: Meredith Adams, Don Barnes, Will Bland, Todd Brantley

Susan Brown, Betty Duncan, David Huard, Gwyn LaFave, Larry Tingen, Sallie Wahl