St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Santa Clarita
The First Sunday of Advent
10:30 AM — November 29, 2026

The Altar flowers are given to the glory of God.

Before the service begins, we encourage you to use the following for meditation.

As disciples of Jesus, when we pray we are standing in the place of Jesus before God. As his Body, our prayers come forth through his mouth. God wants and anticipates that those prayers, over time, will sound and feel more and more like the prayers of his own only begotten child. Through them, we become more like the person God created us to be. Br. Keith Nelson, SSJE

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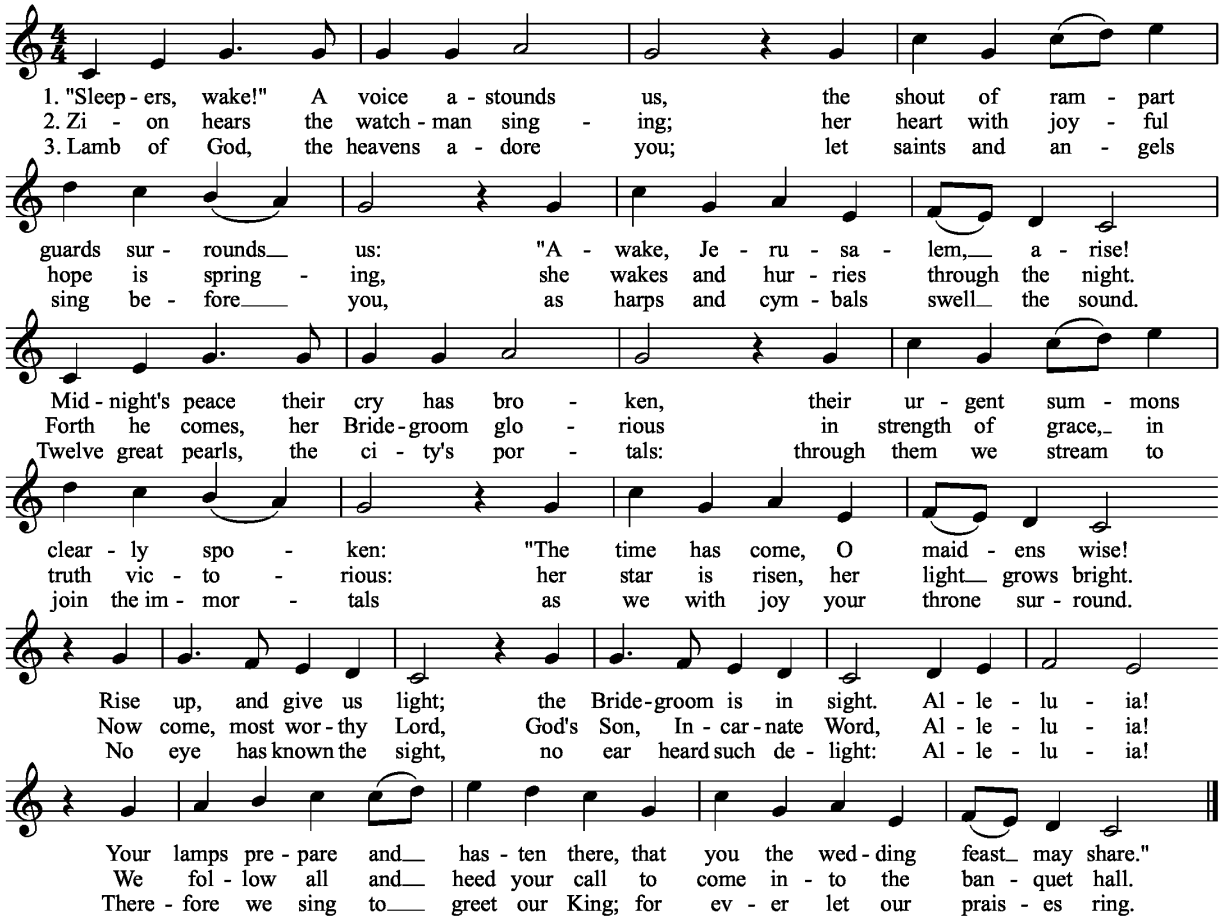
-Generally, we stand to give praise, sit to listen (to scripture and sermon), and stand or kneel to pray. These postures help us stay focused on the worship, but there are no strict rules and you should take whatever posture is appropriate to your needs.-

Prelude *Clair de Lune* Claude Debussy

Introit *Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord* Joseph M. Martin
St. Stephen's Parish Choir

-Processions have long been an important part of liturgical worship. At the beginning of the service they signify an intention to move toward the altar and into direct relationship to worship God. Those who wish to may bow in reverence as the cross passes to acknowledge Christ's sacrifice upon it.-

Entrance Hymn #62 "Sleepers, wake!" *Wachet auf*



Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Holy and Gracious God, we pray that as we light this candle so, too, will a fire of Hope be kindled in our hearts. May we hold this Hope gently, as we are urged to stay awake and be ready for a most amazing event! As we prepare to receive the Christ Child, may we be ever mindful of our love for you, and Yours for us. This will keep the flames of Hope burning in this Advent season. We pray all this in the name of Emmanuel. **Amen.**

-The liturgy is God's community gathered to actively share the Word and the Eucharist. We invite and encourage your participation in this community. Please join in the spoken responses and hymns shown in the service bulletin.-

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

-The opening acclamation is the greeting of the people by the presider and their response, which begins the service. Its purpose is to bring the congregation corporately into dialogue with the presider and set a tone for the celebration.-

Priest: Blessed are you, holy and living One.
People: You come to your people and set them free.

Said 3 times:
Priest: Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
People: Have mercy upon us.

-A Collect is a short prayer with a specific structure. Its purpose is to gather into one the individual prayers of the People. The Collect of the Day is a specific prayer that reflects upon the lectionary readings for the given day of the liturgical year.-

The Collect of the Day

Priest: God be with you.
People: And also with you.
Priest: Let us pray.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your 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 living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

THE LESSONS

The First Reading Isaiah 64:1-9

Reader: Ryan Hubbard

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah.

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence--as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil--to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one

who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People: Thanks be to God.

-The Book of Common Prayer has always placed great importance on the Psalms in worship. They are sung or said in every service of the church, and their words make up the petitions and language of our liturgy. —

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

Reader: Richard Holdredge

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 Second Reading 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Reader: Richard Holdredge

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

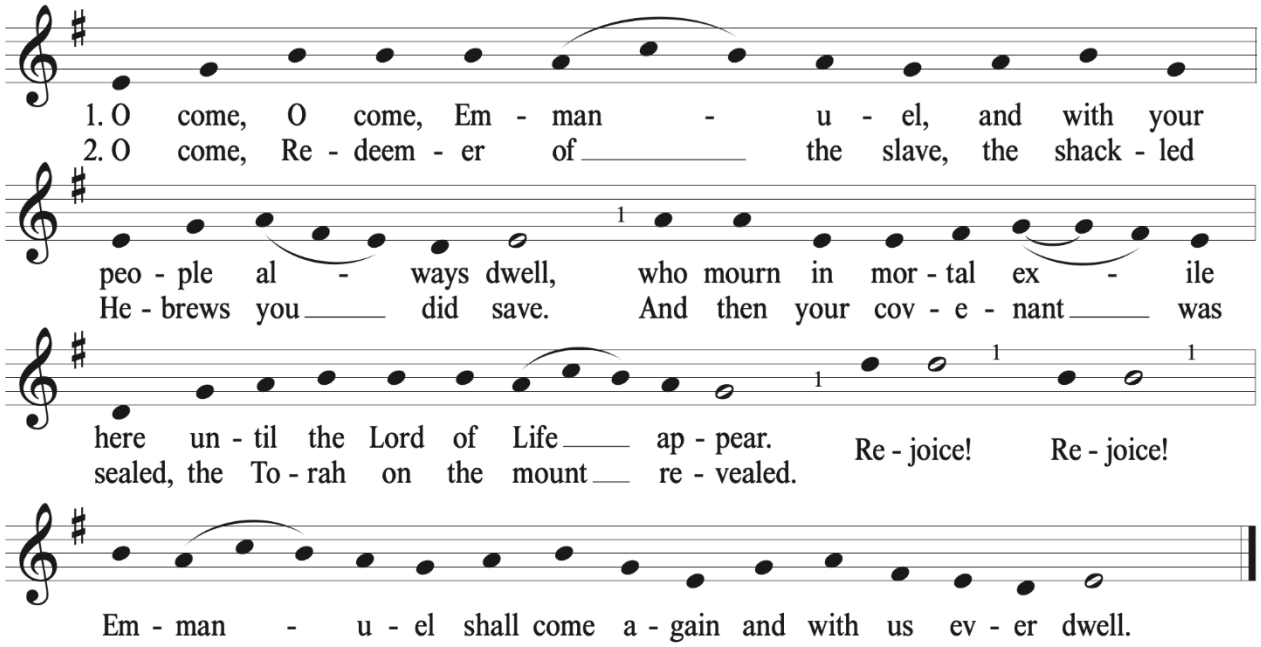
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind-- just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you-- so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People: Thanks be to God.

-The Gospel procession moves into the congregation as a liturgical reminder that Jesus walked among us.-

Please stand as you are able.

Gradual Hymn #56 "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (vs. 1 & 2) *Veni Emmanuel*



-The Gospel is comprised primarily of the words Christ himself spoke, and so we stand out of reverence for the good news that has been brought for us and all people.

Those who wish, make the sign of the cross with the right-thumb on the forehead, the lips, and the heart when the Gospel is announced, praying silently, God be in my head and in my thinking. God be in my lips and in my speaking. God be in my heart and my departing.-

The Gospel Reading Mark 13:24-37

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Mark.
People: Glory to you, O Christ.

Jesus said, "In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

Priest: The Gospel of the Savior.
People: Praise to you, O Christ.

-The Sermon or Homily helps us apply the words of the early prophets and Christ in our lives.-

The Sermon

The Very Rev. Christopher Montella
Rector

A period of silent reflection follows the sermon.

-The Nicene Creed is the statement of what we believe. It is one of the most ancient and corporate confession of our faith, having been adopted by the first ecumenical council in the year 325. When we recite this creed we are joining a great heritage of the holy universal Church through the centuries.

Some people may choose to bow their heads at the verse, For us and for our salvation...and was made man. This gesture marks the mystery of the Incarnation as the central Christian message of God's love for the world.-

Please stand as you are able.

Nicene Creed

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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
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],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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.

-Prayer is offered for the Universal Church, the Nation and all in authority, the welfare of the world, concerns of the local community, for those who suffer or who are in any trouble, and for the departed.-

The Prayers of the People

Reader: The Hubbard Family

My friends, what I say to you I say to all: keep awake. Let us appeal to God, saying, "Show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved."

Restore your holy catholic Church, O God of hosts. Give us eyes to see that together we are not lacking any spiritual gift. Strengthen us that we may be blameless on the day of our Savior Jesus Christ.
Silence
Intercessor: Show the light of your countenance,
People: And we shall be saved.

Restore justice throughout the world, O God of hosts. You work for those who wait for you. Come to the help of the oppressed and the needy.
Silence
Intercessor: Show the light of your countenance,
People: And we shall be saved.

Restore your creation, O God of hosts. Awesome are your deeds and wonderful are the works of your hands.
Silence
Intercessor: Show the light of your countenance,
People: And we shall be saved.

Restore peace in the city, O God of hosts. Make us mindful of our interdependence. Help us to respect the dignity of our neighbors.
Silence
Intercessor: Show the light of your countenance,
People: And we shall be saved.

Restore the weak to strength, O God of hosts. Come quickly with healing in your wings. We lift up to you all those struggling due to the threat of violence, starvation and the devastation of war at home and throughout the world. We pray for all those on the prayer list.
The congregation may add their own petitions and thanksgivings.
Silence
Intercessor: Show the light of your countenance,
People: And we shall be saved.

Restore our hope, O God of hosts. Though we all fade like a leaf, still you are faithful. You have called your people into the fellowship of your Son forever. We pray for all those who have died.
Silence
Intercessor: Show the light of your countenance,
People: And we shall be saved.

Priest:
O Emmanuel, God-with-us, You show us the face of divinity, and reveal the fullness of our humanity. Come: renew your creation, restore us all in Christ, and enable us to become who we are, your faithful and loving people. We pray in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

Confession

Let us confess our sins to God.

God of all mercy,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.

Absolution

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

-The Peace is an extension of Christian greeting and teaching to love our neighbor as ourselves. It symbolizes our intent to forgive as we are forgiven, to live in peace with all people. Members are encouraged to greet one another with a sign of God's peace with the clasping of hands, a reverential bow, a hug, or a peace sign.-

The Peace

Priest: The peace of Christ be always with you.
People: And also with you.

Members of the congregation who are joining us via livestream are encouraged to post "Peace be with you" in the comments or to use the "like" or "love" reaction button to take part in the virtual exchange of God's peace with the rest of the congregation at this time.

Please be seated.

Welcome and Announcements

We are pleased to celebrate the following birthdays: Carolina Thompson on Nov. 29th, Brenda Thompson & James Torres on Nov. 30th, James Mackey on Dec. 2nd, Carol Vestuto on Dec. 3rd, Kathy Gonzales on Dec. 4th, and James Webb on Dec. 5th. We also celebrate the wedding anniversary of Kimberlee & Mark Bridgeford on Dec. 3rd.

Offertory Prayer

The People remain seated and say together:

Loving God, you alone are the source of every good gift. Everything we have, and all that we are, comes from you. Now, help us to be grateful, accountable, and, with praise and thanksgiving, to give of ourselves generously, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE TABLE

Offertory

For the Fruit of All Creation — Donald J. McCullough
St. Stephen's Parish Choir

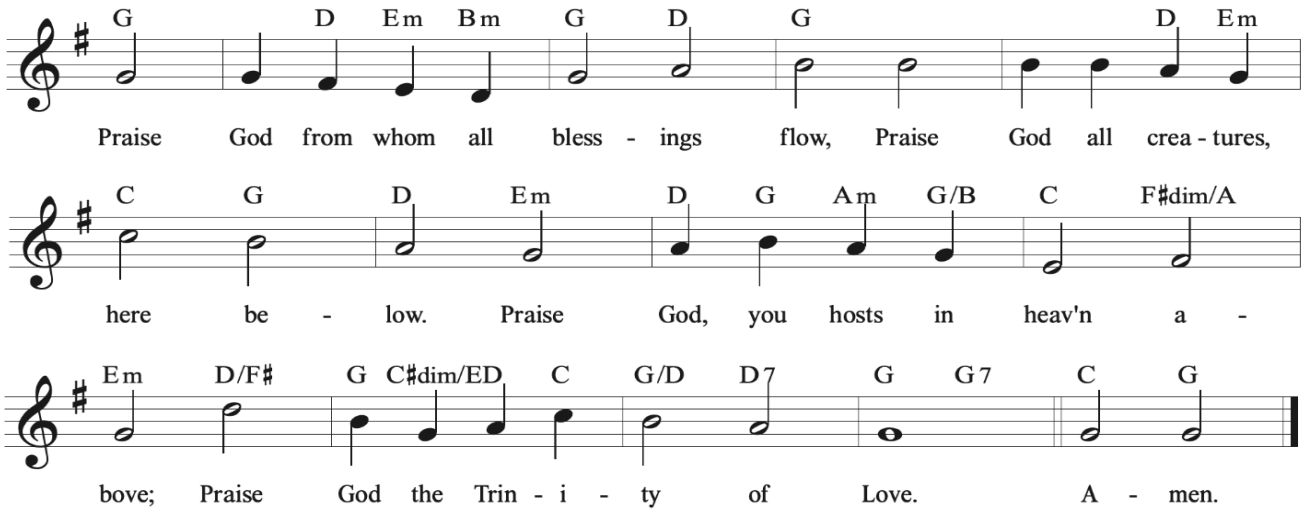
-A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself. For Anglicans there are two great sacraments: Eucharist and Baptism.

As continuation of thousands of years of spiritual practice, talent, treasure, and oblations are offered before the altar in our response to God's care and nurture.-

Please stand as you are able.

Doxology

Old 100th



-The Sursum Corda (Lift up your hearts) is a form of introduction to prayer handed down over the centuries. This dialogue is an invitation for the people joining in the Eucharistic offering, to raise minds and hearts to "things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."-

Priest: God be with you.
People: And also with you.
Priest: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them to God.
Priest: Let us give thanks.
People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

-We praise God for the long arc of salvation history. We do not approach with petition but simply with grateful remembrance of all that God has done.-

Worship and praise belong to you, God our maker. Out of nothing, you called all worlds into being and still you draw the universe to its fulfilment. Dawn and evening celebrate your glory till time shall be no more.

In Christ your Son the life of heaven and earth were joined, sealing the promise of a new creation, given, yet still to come.

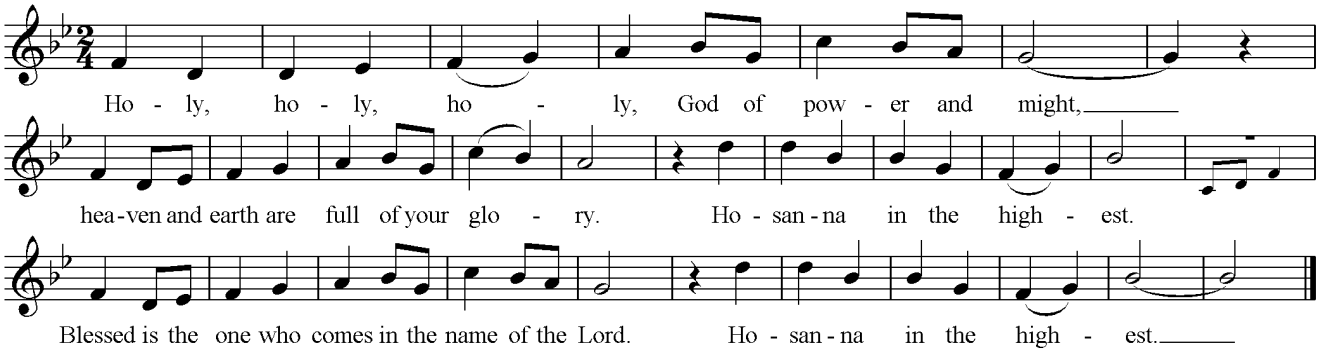
Taught by your Spirit, we who bear your threefold likeness look for the City of Peace in whose light we are transfigured and the earth transformed.

As children of your redeeming purpose who await the coming of your Son, we offer you our praise, with angels and archangels and the whole company of heaven singing the hymn of your unending glory:

-The holiness of God is a strong theme in the Old Testament, present here in the Sanctus, which echoes the words of the high angels in the prophet Isaiah's vision of the dwelling place of God (Isaiah 6:1-3).

Our worshipful cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy," is coupled with the acclamation "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."-

Sanctus Hymn #S 127 Hampton



Standing or kneeling as you are able.
Glory and thanksgiving be to you, most loving God. In Jesus you showed us yourself. Our hope is built on him, the first, the last, the living one. Obedient, even to accepting death, He opened the gate of glory and calls us now to share the life of heaven.

Before he was given up to suffering and death, alight with the vision of a feast that heralded a kingdom yet to come, at supper with his disciples he took bread and offered you thanks. He broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying: "Take, eat. This is my Body: it is broken for you."

After supper, he took the cup, he offered you thanks, and gave it to them saying: "Drink this, all of you. This is my Blood of the new covenant; it is poured out for you, and for all, that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me."

We now obey your Son's command.
Priest and People
We recall his blessed passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension; and we look for the coming of his Kingdom.

-The epiclesis is the point at which the church, through the voice of the Celebrant, asks God to make holy, 'sanctify', 'send', 'pour', 'breathe', both the gift of bread and wine and also the gathered community.-

Hear us, most merciful God, and send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon this bread and this wine, that, overshadowed by your Spirit's life-giving power, they may be the Body and Blood of your Son, and we may be kindled with the fire of your love and renewed for the service of your Kingdom.

Help us who are baptized into the fellowship of Christ's Body to live and work to your praise and glory; may we grow together in unity and love until at last, in your new creation, we enter into our heritage in the company of the Virgin Mary, Stephen and all your saints, apostles, and prophets, and all of our siblings living and departed.

Through Jesus Christ our Savior, with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory be to you, O God of all ages, world without end. **AMEN**.

Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom as Jesus taught us.

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

A period of silence is kept.

-The fraction (breaking of the bread) is a crucial link between what has come before and what comes after it. Christ has offered his life for us, and the breaking of the bread makes it possible for all to share in that life.-

Priest: Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

-The outward and visible sign in the sacrament of the Eucharist is the bread and the wine. We eat and drink the sacramental foods. Through the inward and spiritual grace of this sacramental action we are reconstituted as Christ's body, infused with Christ's life, and empowered to be Christ's presence in the world.-

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.

All are welcome to receive communion. The table we set belongs to God. Wherever you find yourself on your spiritual journey you are welcome to receive the Bread and Wine made holy.

The church teaches that temporal isolation cannot constrain the sacrament's ineffable power. Calling us to "massive, corporate, spiritual communion,"

The Invitation to Holy Communion

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

Priest and People say together:
O Jesus Christ, you have instituted for us a great sacrament in your promise of life and love, which we remember now as we hear your words again: "This is my body; this is my blood — given for you." Feed us in our hearts with faith and trust, draw us closer to you and to each other, and strengthen us for service to our neighbor. We come before you now, with hearts you have fed all our lives with the promise that you have given yourself for us. Keep us strong in that faith until we can meet at your table again. Amen.

Please be seated.

Please follow usher instructions for taking communion.

Communion

-In the post communion prayer we give thanks for the sacramental signs of Christ's presence to us and we ask God to empower and accompany us into the world to witness to God's love.-

Please stand as you are able.

Post Communion Prayer

Let us pray.

God of new beginnings,
you draw near to us in word and sacrament
to strengthen and renew us;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit,
may your light so shine through us
that all may welcome your Son at his coming.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Emmanuel. Amen.

-The blessing is God's promise to be with us as we leave communal worship and return to the world to serve God and God's people.-

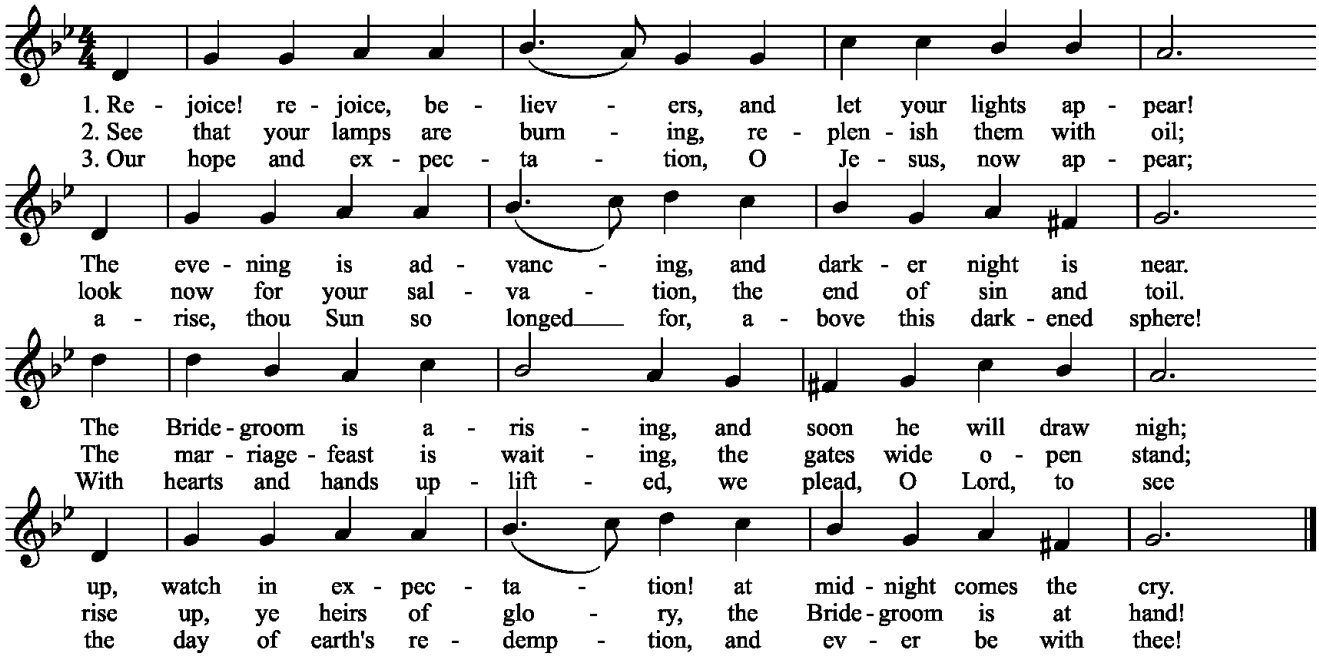
Blessing

Know that the ever-present mystery we name God
is in your past forgiving you,
in your present loving you,
and in your future meeting you.
And may the blessing of the Source of life, love and hope,
the Word of life, compassion and wisdom
and Breath of life, grace and truth
surround, sustain and surprise you,
this day and all your days. **Amen**

-Processions have long been an important part of liturgical worship. At the conclusion of the service the retiring procession represents the carrying of the Gospel message into the world.

Those who wish to may bow in reverence as the cross passes to acknowledge Christ's sacrifice upon it.-

Closing Hymn #68 "Rejoice! rejoice, believers" *Llangloffan*



-The dismissal asserts the relationship between worship and living. It is a call to mission, a call to live the baptismal and Eucharistic life in the world.-

The Dismissal

Priest: As we await our coming Savior, go in peace to love and serve God.
People: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Prayers of the People taken from *Praying the Scriptures* by Jeremiah D. Williamson, ©2014 by Jeremiah D. Williamson. All Rights Reserved.
Spiritual Communion Prayer: Amended From a prayer written by Bishop Guy Erwin *(ELCA)*
Eucharistic Prayer II: *Scottish Liturgy 1982.*
Post Communion Prayer: https://liturgy.co.nz/.
From *The Hymnal 1982* #61 "Sleepers, wake!", Words: Philipp Nicolai (15561608); tr. Carl P. Daw, Jr. (b. 1944) Music: *Wachet auf,* melody Hans Sachs (1494-1576); adapt. Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608); arr. and harm. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). #56 "Come, O come, Emmanuel" Words: Latin, ca. 9th cent.; ver. *Hymnal 1940,* alt. Music: *Veni, veni, Emmanuel,* plainsong, Mode 1, Processionale, 15th cent.; adapt. Thomas Helmore (1811—1890); acc. Richard Proulx (b. 1937). Copyright: Music: Both accompaniments copyright © 1975, G.I.A. Publications, Inc. #S127 The Holy Eucharist *Sanctus,* Setting: Calvin Hampton (1938-1984). #68 "Rejoice! rejoice, believers", Words: Laurentius Laurenti (1660-1722); tr. Sarah B. Findlater (1823-1907), alt. Music: *Llangloffan,* melody from *Hymnau a Thonau er Gwasanaeth yr Eglwys yng Nghymru,* 1865.
Doxology —Music: Old 100th, melody from *Pseumes octante trois de David,* 1551, alt.; harm. After Louis Bourgeois (1510?-1561?).