# SAINT STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



# Holy Eucharist & CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2025 4:00 PM

# CHRISTMAS FLOWERS Given to the glory of God and...

In Loving Memory of:		
Julia W. Jay (Judy)	by	Julia & Jim George
George and Loucille Singleton,	- 3	
Frank and Elizabeth Warburton & Pat Schwark	by	Bonnie & Dave Warburton
Jean Montella, Jeanne Long, Stan Long	- 5	
and our grandparents	by	Rev. Christopher & Erick
Phil Zinkewicz and James Gibby	by	The Johnsons
My brother, Jeff Fikejs	by	Tracy Stapp
Our Parents	by	Debbie & Rev. Greg Richards
Tony Rizzardi	by	Mia Behrens
Carol & Gillian Plote	by	Steve Plote & Family
My beloved husband Jeffrey Stephen Gibbons	by	Colleen Gibbons
Vinal and Marie Mondy, Lewis W. Mondy	by	Mary Roberti
Hilary Louise Shaw	by	Diane Shaw
Margaret Morrow	by	Robin & Dave Morrow
Carol's parents/Nick's parents: Amelia Florenda	- 3	
Gamboa, Ramon Nepomuceno Gaboa, Marjorie		
Dale Vestuto, Nicholas Michael Vestuto	by	The Vestutos
Max & Delilah Grzybowski, The Rev. Canon	- 3	
Dr. Kenneth Higginbotham, Ethel "Pat"		
Higginbotham, Scott K. Higginbotham	by	Mary Jo & Ken Higginbotham
Jonathan & Beatrice Spencer-Walters,	- 3	86
Dejean & Ida McEwen	by	Tom & Desiree Spencer-Walters
J	J	1
<u>In Thanksgiving for:</u>		
Tony Montella, our family and friends	by	Rev. Christopher & Erick
Our family and friends all over the country	,	1
and the world whom we dearly love	by	Bob & Ginny Gregor
Gerry Rizzardi	by	Mia Behrens
Family near and far and the opportunity to		
visit regularly	by	Mary Mercogliano
The birth of our beautiful daughter,	•	
Josephine Fulleman	by	Grace & Kevin
Our family being together this Christmas	by	The Sena Cario Family
God's blessings	by	The Waugh Family
Our family and our many blessings	by	Deanna & Bill Gannon
Our many blessings, especially our children &	-	
grandchildren	by	Marv & Miriam Aardahl
-	-	

# Upon entering the church we ask that you extend a respectful courtesy to others by speaking quietly and silencing all cell phones.

-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

Christmas Lullaby Alexander Georgakis, piano Jason Robert Brown

-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.-



# The Lighting of the Christ Candle & Blessing of the Creche

Priest: The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

People: And we beheld his glory.

Priest: Let us pray.

#### Priest:

Most merciful and loving God, you have made this day holy by the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ, and by the child-bearing of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Grant that we your people may enter with joy into the celebration of this day, and may also rejoice for ever as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.** 



-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: Alleluia! Alleluia! To us, a child is born.

People: Come, Let us adore him. Alleluia! Alleluia!

-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

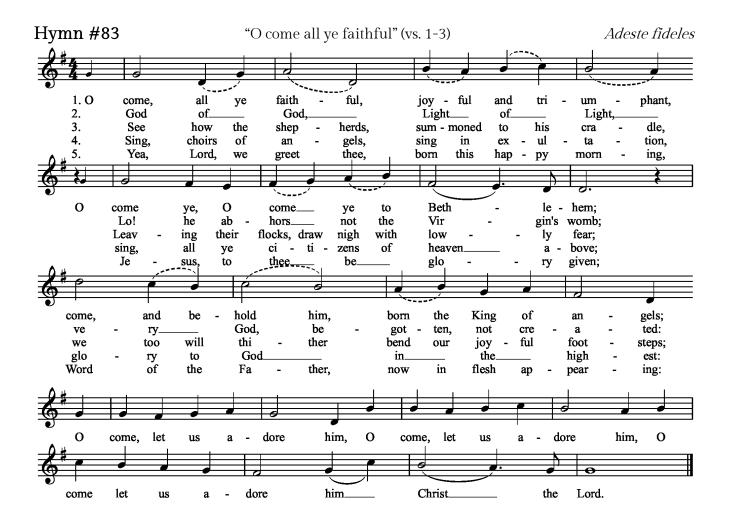
O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.** 

Narrator: Jillian Mackey

Please be seated.

# The Telling of the Christmas Story





# Christmas Message

The Very Rev. Christopher Montella Rector

-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.-

# Prayers of the People

Reader: Marv Aardahl

Friends in Christ, on this most holy night of Jesus's birth, let us pray for ourselves and all those in need of our prayers saying: God of Love, hear our prayer.

For the church of Christ, that it may faithfully share the good news of Jesus and care for the needs of God's people.

Intercessor: God of Love,
People: Hear our prayer.

For peace in our troubled world, that sadness and unfairness may be replaced by the light of peace and love.

Intercessor: God of Love,
People: Hear our prayer.

For people without homes, people without jobs, and people who are hungry or sad.

Intercessor: God of Love,
People: Hear our prayer.

For those who have to work tonight: doctors and nurses, police officers and firefighters and all people whose work keeps them from sharing this evening with their family and friends.

Intercessor: God of Love, **People:** Hear our prayer.

#### Priest:

Holy God, hear our prayers and help all people take great joy in the birth of Jesus and receive the hope that Christmas brings, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **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.

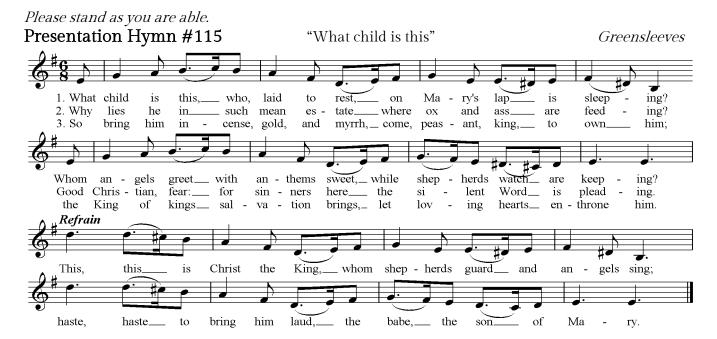
#### Welcome

# THE LITURGY OF THE TABLE

# Offertory Hymn

-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.-



-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. Day and night celebrate your glory till time shall be no more.

In Jesus Christ, your Word became flesh, and on this night was born of the Virgin Mary. He emptied himself, taking our human form, that through his incarnation and passion we might come to share in his divine nature.

Filled with the Spirit, who at the first Creation moved over the face of the waters, and who overshadowed the blessed Virgin at Nazareth, we await with joy the fulfilment of your new Creation.

As children of your redeeming purpose who celebrate the birth 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).

Priest and people say together:

Holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Standing or kneeling as you are able.

Glory and thanksgiving be to you, most loving God. In Jesus the Messiah you have come to us, and live among us, that we might forever live with you. In the manger at Bethlehem, in his flight to Egypt, and as the carpenter's son, the Only Begotten humbled himself to meet us.

Obedient to your calling, he accepted death on the cross. When you exalted him on the third day, and bestowed on him the name above all names, he opened the gate of glory that we might be your children, and share in his kingdom of Peace.

Before he was given up to suffering and death, desiring to complete the work for which he came into the world, 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. *The Priest and people say together* 

We recall his blessed passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension; and we look for the coming of his Kingdom.

Made one with him, we offer you these gifts with them ourselves, a single, holy, living sacrifice.

-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, the 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**.

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for 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 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

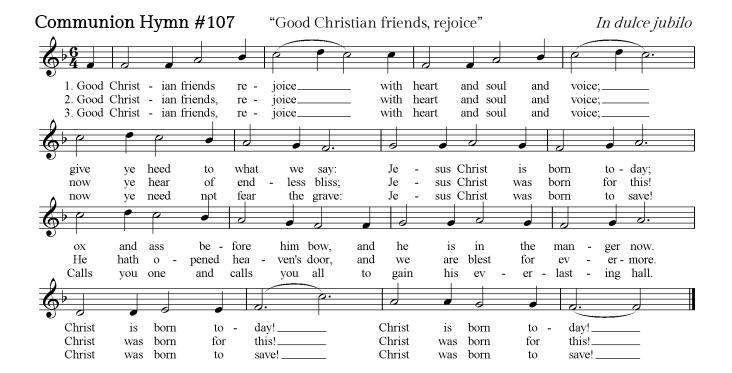
A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

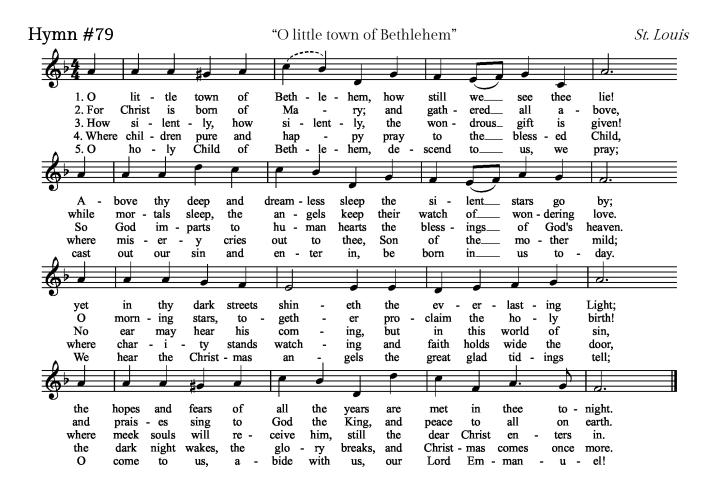
Priest and People say together:

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Please be seated.

Please follow usher instructions for taking 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.

Infinite, intimate God, in this Eucharist we have celebrated your presence with us. May we grow in the divine life of Christ who humbly shared our human life. Fill us with joy and send us out to share this good news with others. We ask this through Jesus Christ Emmanuel. Amen.



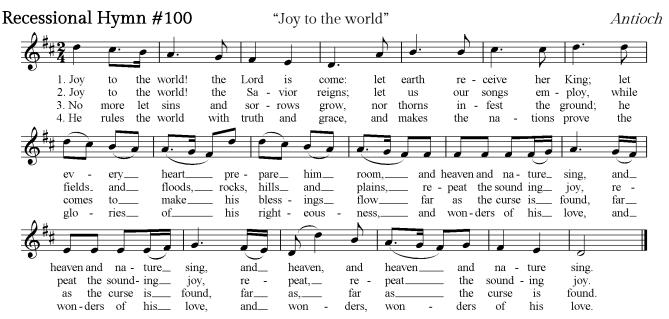
-The blessing is God's promise to be with us as we leave communal worship and return to the world to serve God and God's people.-

### Blessing

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the faithfulness of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing God Almighty, The one Holy and Undivided Trinity be upon you and remain with you always.

-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.-



-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.-

#### Dismissal

Priest: Alleluia, alleluia! Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!

# Christmas Pageant Cast:

Narrator — Jillian Mackey Mary - Daryn Tucker

Joseph — Damien Toro

Baby Jesus — Josephine Fulleman

**Angel Gabriel** - Henry Hunt

Guiding Star - Darlyn Toro

Shepherd - Kevin Fulleman

Camel - Sean Simmons

Donkey — River Futeman

Three Kings: Grace Fulleman, Sarah Simmons, Wilsha Tucker

And a special thanks to all the other shepherds, angels and animals who joined in the pageant to make a truly memorable performance.

Music Credits:
Spiritual Communion Prayer: St. Alphonsus de Liguori, 1696-1787
From The Hymnal 1982 #96 "Angels we have heard on high", Words: French carol; tr. James Chadwick (1813-1882), alt. Music. Gloria, French carol; arr. Edward Shippen Barnes (1887-1958). #102 "Once in royal David's ciry", Words St. 2-2 and 4-6, Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1818-1818), alt.; st. 3, James Waring McCrady (b. 1938). Music. Irby, melody Henry John Gauntlett (1805-1876); harm. Arthur Henry Mann (1850-1929). #109 "The first Nowell", Words: English carol, 18th cent. Music. The First Nowell, English carol, 17th cent., harm. John Stainer (1840-1901. #83 "O come, all ye faithful", Words. John Francis Wade (1711-1786); tr. Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880) and others, Music. John William Chatterion Dix (1837-1898), Music. Greensleveres English melody; harm. Stristmas Carols New and Old, 1871. #87 "Harl: the herald angels sing", Words. Charles Wesley (1707-1788), alt; Music. Mendelssohn, Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), adapt. William H. Cummings (1831-1915), #111 "Silent night, holy night", Words: Joseph Mohr (1792-1848); tr. John Freeman Young (1820-1885); Music. Stille Nacht, melody Franz Xaver Gruber (1787-1863); harm. Carl H. Reinecke (1824-1910). #100 "Joy to the world", Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748), alt; Music. Antior.A. George Frideric Handel (1685-1759); adapt. and arr. Lowell Mason (1792-1872).
From Lift Every Voice and Sing II: #27 "Away in a manger", Words: Anonymous; Music. James R. Murray (1841-1905); arr. Edythe Ethelynn Woodruff (b. 1970). Used by permission.