

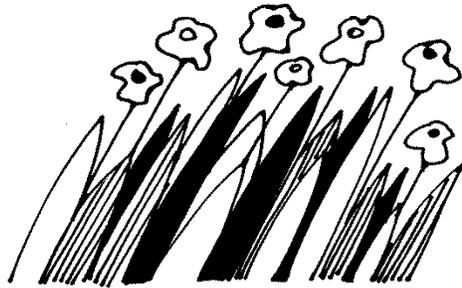
SAINT STEPHEN'S PARISH

Pittsfield, Massachusetts

The Second Sunday of Advent

December 6, 2020

THE GRASS WITHERS.
THE FLOWER FADES.
BUT THE WORD
OF THE LORD
STANDS FOREVER.



I S A I A H 4 0 : 8

Our Mission

is to be the heart and hands of Christ: nourishing people, transforming lives

Our Core Values

May be found on our Web Page

THE HOLY EUCHARIST
The Second Sunday of Advent
December 6, 2020

Greeting, Announcements

Hymn 67 “Comfort, comfort ye my people” *Psalm 42*

1. Comfort, comfort ye my people, speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
comfort those who sit in darkness mourning ‘neath their sorrow’s load.
Speak ye to Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;
tell her that her sins I cover, and her warfare now is over.

2. Hark, the voice of one that crieth in the desert far and near,
calling us to new repentance since the kingdom now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God away;
Let the valleys rise to meet him and the hills bow down to greet him.

3. Make ye straight what long was crooked, make the rougher places plain;
let your hearts be true and humble, as befits his holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord now o’er earth is shed abroad;
and all flesh shall see the token that the word is never broken.

The Word of God

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
People **And blessed be his kingdom now and forever. Amen.**

The Celebrant prays:

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**

Celebrant Holy God,
 Holy and Mighty,
 Holy Immortal One,
People **Have mercy upon us.**

Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

First Lesson *Isaiah 40:1-11*

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People Thanks be to God

Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13 *(please read responsively at the half verse)*

- 1 You have been gracious to your land, O Lord, *
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.
- 2 You have forgiven the iniquity of your people *
and blotted out all their sins.
- 8 I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, *
**for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.**
- 9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *
that his glory may dwell in our land.
- 10 Mercy and truth have met together; *
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
- 11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
- 12 The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, *
and our land will yield its increase.
- 13 Righteousness shall go before him, *
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

The Nicene Creed *said by all, standing*

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

The Leader and the People pray responsively.

In peace, let us pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord, have mercy".

For the holy Church of God, that it may be filled with truth and love, and be found without fault at the day of your coming, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For Michael our Presiding Bishop, for Doug our own Bishop, for all bishops and other ministers, and for all the holy people of God, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For St. Stephen's Search Committee; fill them with wisdom and awareness of your vision for this congregation as we seek a new rector and spiritual leader. Grant continued grace and commitment to them; that they may be faithful companions to each other, to the Vestry and to our beloved Parish. Pray for St. Stephen's Church.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who fear God and believe in you, Lord Christ, that our divisions may cease, and that all may be one as you and the Father are one, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, that a spirit of respect and forbearance may grow among nations and peoples, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those in positions of public trust especially the President, Vice-President, President-elect and Vice president-elect, that they may serve justice, and promote the dignity and freedom of every person, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For our enemies and those who wish us harm, and for all whom we have injured or offended, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who have commended themselves to our prayers; for our families, friends, and neighbors; that being freed from anxiety, they may live in joy, peace, and health, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For a vaccine and the complete eradication of the COVID-19 pandemic and for those who bravely put their lives on the line to serve and save others: members of the armed services, health care workers, first responders, law enforcement personnel, educators, grocery store workers and all others, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who have died in the communion of your Church, and those whose faith is known to you alone, that, with all the saints, they may have rest in that place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, blessed Stephen and all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life to Christ our God.

To you, O Lord our God.

Hasten, O Father, the coming of your kingdom; and grant that we your servants, who now live by faith, may with joy behold your Son at his coming in glorious majesty; even Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. ***Amen.***

Confession of Sin

Celebrant Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor

Silence

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.

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**

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

The Holy Communion

The Great Thanksgiving

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 our thanks and praise**

The Celebrant proceeds

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing. 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 say **Holy, 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.**

The people stand or kneel. Then the Celebrant continues

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life. On the night before he died for us, 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, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People say

We remember his death,

We proclaim his resurrection,

We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine. We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with Blessed Stephen and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation. 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 forever. **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 Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People **Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

Spiritual Communion Prayer

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now celebrated, I desire to offer to you praise and thanksgiving. I remember your death, Lord Christ; I proclaim your resurrection; I await your coming in glory. Since I cannot receive you today in Sacrament of your Body and Blood, I beseech you to come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and in the life to come. Amen

Blessing “And the blessing of the God of Abraham and Sarah, and of Jesus Christ born of our sister, Mary and of the Holy Spirit, who broods over the world as a mother over her children, be upon and remain with you always **Amen**”

Hymn 76 “On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry”

Winchester New

1. On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings glad tidings of the King of kings.
2. Then cleansed be every breast from sin; make straight the way for God within,
and let each heart prepare a home where such a mighty guest may come.

3. For thou art our salvation, Lord, our refuge, and our great reward;
without thy grace we waste away like flowers that wither and decay.
4. To heal the sick stretch out thine hand, and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth, and let thy light restore earth's own true loveliness once more.
5. All praise, eternal Son, to thee, whose advent doth thy people free;
whom with the Father we adore and Holy Spirit evermore.

Priest Let us bless the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Voluntary "There's a voice in the wilderness crying"

Robert Benson

Ministers of the Celebration

CELEBRANT & PREACHER

The Rev. David DeSmith

LECTOR

Tom Dillon

PRAYERS

William Frazier

ALTAR GUILD

William Frazier

PASTORAL CARE

Sharon Billetter

VOCALISTS

Wavelyn and Jeffrey Hine

VIDEO PRODUCTION

MusiChris DJ and Lighting Service

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THIS WEEK AT ST. STEPHEN'S

SUNDAY, December 6

10:00 a.m. Facebook Service
1:00 p.m. Grab and Go Lunch.
Cathedral of the Beloved

FRIDAY, December 11

Parish Office Closed
4:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Table Grab and Go

MONDAY, December 7

SATURDAY, December 12

TUESDAY, December 8

5:00 pm Zoom Vespers

WEDNESDAY, December 9

SUNDAY, December 13

10:00 a.m. Facebook Services
1:00 p.m. Grab and Go Lunch
Cathedral of the Beloved

THURSDAY, December 10

4:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Table

THIS WEEK'S PRAYER LIST

SUNDAY

All persons serving in the armed forces and their families: MAJ Andrew B., CPT Nicholas P., ILT Curran J. D., Lance CPL Chad L., SPC Amanda D., Pvt. Corey F. D., Army Ranger Sean J., MAJ Michael C., Micah H.

Saint Luke's, Worcester
Non-parochial priests and deacons
Church Video and Film
Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Reformed Church of Spain

MONDAY

Dioceses of Shyira (Rwanda) and Edmonton (Canada)

TUESDAY

We remember all who need our prayers especially: Timothy A., Madge B., Clarence D., Ken & Diana E., Cyndi K., Henry L., Christina O., Kevin S., Clara V., Maureen W., Abby, Becca, Betty, Donna, Faye, Fiona, Heather, Jay, Jim, Joan, John, Josh, Judy H., Karen, Keith, Linda, Lisa, Maia, Marilyn, Mary, Melissa & Family, Nancy & Rick, Noreen, Pam, Patrick, Paula, Susan, Barbara, Zeke, Marion, Joe, Roy, Marie, Bob, Robert J., Walter H., Jill, Barbara A., Jeff S., Shirley, Maryann J. and family, Marion, Charles W. H., Sydney A., Jeffrey B., Ray, Thomas S., Peter, Barbara D., Ray, William, Doris, Barbara, Erika, Johnathan W., Nancy G., Louis C., all who are impacted by the Coronavirus, Pat, Jack, Francis, Susan, Frank L., Deane, Tom, David P. Joan K., Teddy C.

Those with mental health issues

Dioceses of Shyogwe (Rwanda), Egba and Lafia (both in Nigeria)

WEDNESDAY

Dioceses of Sialkot (Pakistan) and Egba West (Nigeria)

THURSDAY

Habitat for Humanity in Pittsfield
Department of Mental Health
Government of the United States

Dioceses of Singapore, Egbu (Nigeria) and Egypt

FRIDAY

St. Stephen's Welcoming Team
St. Stephen's Cooking Team

Dioceses of Sittwe (Myanmar) and Eha-Amufu (Nigeria)

SATURDAY

Dioceses of Ekiti, Ekiti Kwara, Ekiti Oke and Ekiti West (Nigeria)

PARISH NOTICES

WHO ARE WE? St. Stephen's Parish is a community of people who together seek to serve our community, drawing strength and joy from worshipping together. We don't all believe the same, act the same, vote the same, or dress the same – but we strive to love the same, as Christ loved and served all people.

ST. STEPHEN'S TABLE - Gifts in thanksgiving or in memory can be made by sending a donation to the church with the name of the person to be honored or remembered. You can also make a donation online! Just go to our website, select "Support Our Ministries," and follow the prompts to the list of gift opportunities. Select "St. Stephen's Table" and follow the directions. *This week's Gifts to the Table are given by Philip and Lynne Blanchard and by William Frazier in honor of Virginia Smith's retirement.*

VIRTUAL VESPERS ADVENT SERVICE: Tuesday's during Advent at 5:00p.m. Contact the office, smorrison@ststephenspittsfield.org, for the link or look on Realm. The next service will be on December 8.

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS AND FLOWER DONATIONS are being accepted at the office during business hours, by mail and online. Look for the "Christmas/Christmas Eve" option under Funds when making an online gift.

2021 PLEDGES ARE STILL BEING ACCEPTED. If you did not receive a pledge card, please contact the office and we will send one out.

THE PROFILE AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE SEARCH PROCESS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE ST. STEPHEN'S WEBSITE. Click on the News and Events section and you will find Profile & Search Information including answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the Profile.

SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS – David Nevin, chair., Alec Gillman, vice chair., Josie Ellis, John Garinther, Cathy Carchedi, Susan LeBourdais, Chris Perry and Craig Smith. The Rev. Francie Hills serves as committee chaplain. Wendy Coakley is Vestry Liaison.

LIVING GREEN TIP

If you are still using your old incandescent Christmas lights because it seems wasteful to buy new, you may not be saving anything. A string of 70 incandescent bulbs may draw 350 watts while a similar LED string requires only 3.5 watts. With Massachusetts electric rates averaging over \$.21/ kWh, keeping that string of lights on for 6 hours per day over 45 days will cost you about \$20 (for one string) and \$2 for the LED's. (www.improvementcenter.com)

Cardboard-Breakdown: Susan Wojtasik

Bottles and Cans Toter: John Garinther

MEETINGS HELD AT SAINT STEPHEN'S

All AA and NA meetings remain suspended due to COVID-19

Saint Stephen's

A Jubilee Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts

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Our Vestry

Tom Dillon, Co-Warden

Erin Sullivan, Co-Warden

Mark Miller, Clerk

Leah Luczynski, Treasurer

Valerie Andersen

Louise Penney

Angie Moon

John Culver

Chris Plankey

Wendy Coakley

Our Staff

The Rev. David DeSmith, Bridge Pastor

ddesmith@ststephenspittsfield.org

Joy Mullen, Director of Music

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Sarah Morrison, Parish Administrator

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Dan Moon, Coordinator of St. Stephen's Table

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Bert Boos, Office Assistant

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Weekday Sextons-Berkshire County ARC Jenell Pullano, Supervisor

Sunday Sexton Roy Stillman

The Diocese of Western Massachusetts

The Rt. Rev. Douglas Fisher

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