

Second Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 7, 2025

Voluntary “Sleepers wake! A voice astounds us” J.S. Bach

Hymn 74 “Blest be the King whose coming” *Valet will ich dir geben*

Song of Praise Stanza 2 *(page 1 of booklet)* *Woodlands*

Opening Acclamation *(page 1 in the booklet)*

The Collect

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 11:1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw
like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

New to St. Stephen's? You will find helpful information on the back of this leaflet.

They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples;
the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

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

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

(Please read responsively)

Deus, judicium

- 1 Give the King your justice, O God, *
and your righteousness to the King's Son;
- 2 That he may rule your people righteously *
and the poor with justice;
- 3 That the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, *
and the little hills bring righteousness.
- 4 He shall defend the needy among the people; *
he shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor.
- 5 He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure, *
from one generation to another.
- 6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown field, *
like showers that water the earth.
- 7 In his time shall the righteous flourish; *
there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.
- 18 Blessed be the Lord GOD, the God of Israel, *
who alone does wondrous deeds!
- 19 And blessed be his glorious Name for ever! *
and may all the earth be filled with his glory.
Amen. Amen.

The Gospel Matthew 3: 1-12

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
Glorify to you, Lord Christ.

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea,
proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight."

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Christ.

Sermon

The Rev. Dr. Nina R. Pooley

Affirmation of Faith *(page 2 in the booklet)*

The Prayers of the People *(page 2 in the booklet)*

We also pray for: Ken, Keith, Marcus, Sokpha, Drew; Judy, Robertine, Steph, Paul, Craig, Glen, Thom, Mike, Jay, Linda, Evan, Haley, Eve, Ted, Sophia, Marjorie, Natasha, Philip, Brady, Stephen; Scott; Charley; Doug; David; Susan; Jane; Henry; a just peace for Ukraine, and those affected by the violence in the Middle East and Sudan. We give thanks for our bishop-elect Mignelina Howell.

Confession *(page 4 in the booklet)*

Peace *(page 5 in booklet)*

Offertory Anthem "Every Valley" John Ness Beck

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain made low;
and the crooked made straight, and the rough places plain.

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together;
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Amen. *Isaiah 40: 4-5*

The Great Thanksgiving *(page 5 in booklet)*

Fraction Anthem *(page 8 in booklet)*

Communion Anthem “In the stillness” Arlen Clarke

In the stillness of our darkness,
In the shadows of the night;
Earth is waiting for the promise,
Longing for the coming light.

Once before he came in blessing,
Still he comes, our hearts to win;
Come, Lord Jesus, come in glory,
Let your heaven on earth begin;

Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never;
Never more our presence leave.

Light of Light shine through our darkness,
Turn our night to radiant day
Come, Lord Jesus, come in glory,
Open all our hearts to praise.

Announcements

Post Communion Prayer

Hymn 75 “There’s a voice in the wilderness crying” *Ascension*

Voluntary “Prepare the royal highway” Paul Manz

† † †

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 may be made by sending a donation to the church or through our website. On the website, select “Give,” to find the link to the online giving page. Select “St. Stephen’s Table from the Fund menu.

ADVENT CALENDARS AVAILABLE AT THE BACK OF

SANCTUARY – Pick up a calendar and slow down the season with daily reflections and illustrations.

SUNDAY FUNDAY – December 14, gather in the Sears Room at 9:45 a.m.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP - Caroling and pizza on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 21.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA DEDICATIONS are due on Thursday, December 18. You may give online, use one of the envelopes found in the sanctuary or send your check directly to the office. Please include your loved ones' names.

GIFT CARDS FOR BERKSHIRE IMMIGRANT CENTER – BIC may have moved a few blocks away but their clients' need for assistance remains. Donations of gift cards to local businesses or grocery stores, accessible by bus, may be dropped into the collection basket after worship or brought to the office. The deadline is December 18.



GIVING TO ST. STEPHEN'S IS EASY – Scan the QR code to find our giving form, or text “giviststephens\$youramount” to 73256 (example: giviststephens\$25 will donate \$25.) Message and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel.

Paper Toter- Roy Sutton

Cardboard Home-Paula Morey

THE NEW ENGLAND RINGERS – The acclaimed handbell choir will perform their 2025 holiday concert *The Light of Christmas* at St. Stephen's on Sunday, December 14, 3:00 p.m. Mark your calendar and invite your friends, this is sure to be a wonderful afternoon. Freewill offering

MINISTERS OF THE CELEBRATION

CELEBRANT

The Rev. Dr. Nina R. Pooley

LECTORS.

Wendy Coakley, Paula Morey

LAY MINISTERS

Lois Symonds, Al Symonds

ALTAR GUILD

David Nevin

GREETERS

Craig Reynolds, Christine Reynolds

VESTRY GREETER

Caleb Dillon Harmon

CRUCIFER

Anne Williams

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THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Office Hours: Tuesday-Thursday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Worship: Wednesday, December 10, Compline at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom
Sunday, December 14, 10 a.m.

St. Stephen's Table: Thursday & Friday, Grab and Go, 4:30 p.m.

ESL Classes: Monday & Wednesday, 9:30 a.m.

Meetings: AA: Friday at 6:30 p.m.; Saturday at 10:00 a.m. NA: Saturday, 6:30 p.m. Dining Room

THIS WEEK'S PRAYER LIST

In our Parish prayers, we pray for: Ken E.; Keith C.; Marcus; Sokpha; Drew; Steph M.; Robertine M.; Judy; Paul A.; Craig S.; Glen M.; Mike E.; Thom S.; Jay G.; Linda H.; Evan C.; Haley; Eve; Ted K.; Sophia; Sue C.; Marjorie C.; Natasha L.; Philip R.; Brady W.; David J.; Stephen L.; Scott E.; Charley S.; Doug D.; Susan W.; Jane M.; Henry; a just peace for Ukraine, those affected by the violence in the Middle East and Sudan; and all those affected by gun violence.

We pray for those serving in the armed forces and their families:
MAJ Andrew B., CPT Nichols P., 1LT Curran J.D., Lance CPL Chad L., SPC Amanda D., Pvt. Corey F.D., Army Ranger Sean J., Micah H.

We pray for our community
The Elizabeth Freeman Center
Pittsfield Area Council of Congregations
Members of Congress

In Our Diocesan cycle of prayer we pray for:
St. Mark's/Iglesia Episcopal San Marcos, Worcester
Non-parochial priests & deacons
Church Video & Film
Prayer Shawl Ministry

In our Anglican cycle of prayer we pray for:
Sunday the Church of Bangladesh
Monday: Diocese of Ruwenzori (Uganda)
Tuesday Diocese of East Ruwenzori (Uganda)
Wednesday Diocese of South Ruwenzori (Uganda)
Thursday: Diocese of Sabah (South East Asia)
Friday: Diocese of Sabongidda-Ora (Nigeria)
Saturday: the Sacred Circle (Canada)

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VESTRY

John Garinther, Co-Warden
J. Christopher Perry, Treasurer
James Alden
James Brennan
Leah Luczynski
Christine Furcinite-Reynolds

David Nevin, Co-Warden
Christopher Plankey, Clerk
Al Symonds, Asst. Treasurer
Caleb Dillon Harmon
William Morey

Our Staff

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Joy Mullen, Director of Music
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Dan Moon,
Director of St Stephen's Table
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Weekday Sextons – Ecuadorian Women's Co-op
Sunday Sexton Roy Stillman

The Diocese of Western Massachusetts

The Rt. Rev. Douglas Fisher
800-322-8513 www.diocesewma.org

Welcome to Worship at St. Stephen's

We are delighted to have you with us today as we worship together. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is an inclusive parish welcoming all people - regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or creed. God loves you, and so do we!

All Are Welcome to Receive from God's Table.

Each week we share the bread and the wine: the gifts of God, given for the people of God. We invite you to receive communion, but, if you'd rather receive a blessing, please come forward and indicate that by crossing your arms across your chest.

Receiving Communion:

The bread - When you come forward hold your hands out together, palm up. The clergy person will place a wafer in your hands, and say, "The body of Christ." Your response: "Amen." (Please let the clergy know if you'd prefer a gluten free wafer.)

The wine - is offered by chalice bearers on either side of the aisle in front of the altar area. Those sitting on the right should choose the right side chalice, those sitting on the left, choose the left side chalice. The chalice bearer will offer the wine, saying, "The Blood of Christ." Your response: "Amen." You may receive the wine by taking a small sip from the chalice, or by dipping your wafer in the wine, taking care not to touch the wine with your fingers. You may also choose to hear the words and respond without choosing to partake of the wine.

Children are always welcome at worship!!

Families are welcome to sit wherever they wish. There are child-friendly books in a bookshelf near a coloring station in the back, on the right side of the sanctuary. There's a second coloring station on the front left, where there is also our **Kids' Own Space activity area**. There's a Nursery Nook in the Guild Room for caregivers of infants and toddlers who need to take a break during worship. Caregivers, please come and go as your child needs to - for their safety, **we ask that children be accompanied at all times**. Sunday school is offered on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month, September through May.

Collection Plates are located at each entrance. All gifts gratefully accepted.

Restrooms are located in our Parish House: Exit the sanctuary via the doors on either side of the altar, follow the signs.