



SAINT STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
HOLY EUCHARIST: RITE TWO
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024
THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



“Annunciation” by Henry Ossawa Tanner, 1898

A Penitential Order: Rite Two

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

People ***And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.***

The Celebrant may read one of the following sentences

Jesus said, “The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.” *Mark 12:29-31*

The Celebrant then says

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People

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 Bishop when present, or the Priest, stands and says

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 Lord, have mercy.

People ***Christ, have mercy.***

Celebrant Lord, have mercy.

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People ***And also with you.***

Celebrant Let us pray.

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. ***Amen.*** [The people may be seated for the readings]

A Reading from the book of Micah (5:2 - 5a),

You, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
 who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
 one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
 from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
 when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
 to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,
 in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
 to the ends of the earth;
and he shall be the one of peace.

Reader The Word of the Lord

People *Thanks be to God*

Canticle 15 - The Song of Mary *Magnificat*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *

 for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: *

 the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him *

 in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, *

 he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *

 and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, *

 and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *

 for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, *

 to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. *Amen.*

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (10:5 – 10),

When Christ came into the world, he said,

"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;
in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God'
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."

When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Reader The Word of the Lord

People ***Thanks be to God***

[Please stand, as you are able, for the proclamation of the Gospel]

Priest The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (1:39 - 45)

People ***Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Reader The Gospel of the Lord
People *Praise to you, Lord Christ*

Sermon

The Nicene Creed (from *Enriching Our Worship*) [Please stand, as you are able]

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,
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.

The Prayers of the People – Form VI [The people may be seated]

The Leader and People pray responsively

In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

Silence

For all people in their daily life and work;

For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

For this community, the nation, and the world;

For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

For the just and proper use of your creation;

For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

For Sean Rowe our Presiding Bishop, and Marty Stebbins our Bishop; and for all bishops and other ministers;

For all who serve God in God's Church.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation.

Silence

On the Anglican Cycle of Prayers, we pray for The Church of the Province of Uganda.

On the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for St. Stephen's Stevensville and the Rev. Richard Tardiff, Interim. We also pray for Camp Marshall.

On our parish cycle of prayer, we pray for Darrell and Sue Asbel and Mark and Jaime Barnes.

Within our parish family, we pray for Danielle, Joe, Justin, Katie, Laura, and Libby. We also pray for our hosts and partners - the staff and community members of Saint John's United.

Prayer In Times of Conflict

O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. (*Book of Common Prayer* pg. 824)

Hear us, Lord;

For your mercy is great.

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life.

Silence

The People may add their own thanksgivings

We will exalt you, O God our King;

And praise your Name for ever and ever.

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.

Silence

The People may add their own petitions

Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them;

Who put their trust in you.

The Celebrant concludes with a suitable Collect

Lord, hear the prayers of thy people; and what we have asked faithfully, grant that we may obtain effectually, to the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

The Peace

All stand. The Celebrant says to the people [Please stand, as you are able]

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

Offertory Sentences

Ascribe to the Lord the honor due His Name; bring offerings and come into His courts.

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. *Psalm 96:8, Ephesians 5:2*

If you need or prefer a gluten-free communion wafer, please let the usher or reader know at this time.

Eucharistic Prayer A [Please stand, as you are able]

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 God 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. 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 forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Celebrant and People

***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.

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 are yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

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

Officiant and People

***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

Celebrant Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

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

Celebrant then says

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 at the Lord's Table.

Communion in one kind (the bread or the wine) is just as valid as communion in both kinds.

If you would like to receive a blessing instead of receiving communion, simply come forward with your arms crossed.

After Communion, the Celebrant says
Let us pray.

Post-Communion Prayer

*Almighty and everliving God,
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
of the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.
And now, Father, send us out
to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you
as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.*

Blessing

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. *Amen.*

Announcements

Celebrant Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.
People *Thanks be to God.*

Churchy Term of the Week – Advent Wreath

A circle of greenery, marked by four candles that represent the four Sundays of the season of Advent. An additional candle is lit as each new Sunday is celebrated in Advent. Advent wreaths are used both in churches and in homes for devotional purposes. The candles may be blue, purple, or lavender, depending on local custom. Some Advent wreaths include a white candle in the center known as the “Christ Candle,” which is lit on Christmas Eve.

Random Churchy Term of the Day – Laetare Sunday

The fourth Sunday of Lent in the Roman Catholic liturgical calendar. The term is derived from the opening words of the Latin Mass, “Rejoice (*Laetare*) Jerusalem” (Is 66:10). The church is called to joyful anticipation of the victory to be won. This joyful theme provides lightening from the penitential emphasis of Lent. Since the thirteenth century the celebrant of the eucharist has been permitted to wear rose-colored vestments which express the change of tone in the Lenten observance. Laetare Sunday therefore may be called “Rose Sunday.” This custom is not required in the Episcopal Church, but it is observed by some parishes with a traditional Anglo-catholic piety.

Adapted from Don S. Armentrout’s *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church: A User-Friendly Reference for Episcopalians* Church Publishing Inc., 2000.



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