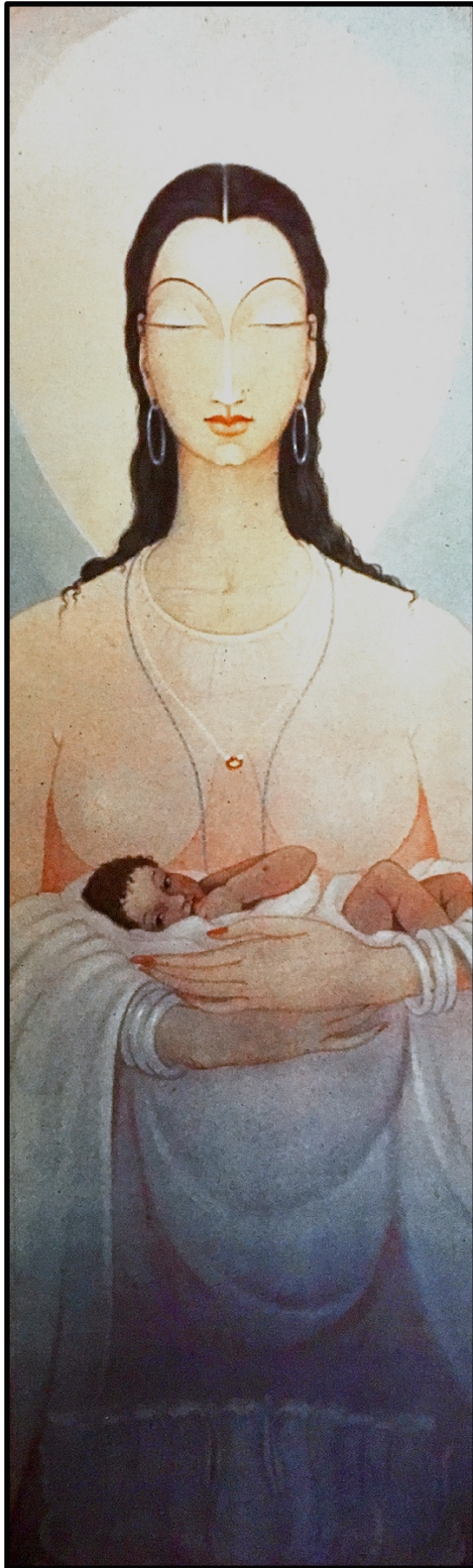




SAINT STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
MORNING PRAYER: RITE II  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2024  
THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

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*"And the Word Became Flesh" by Frank Wesley, 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

*The officiant begins with a passage of scripture*

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. *Philippians 1:2*

### **Confession of Sin**

*The Officiant says to the people*

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Silence may be kept.*

*Officiant and People together, all kneeling*

***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 Officiant alone says*

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

### **The Invitatory and Psalter**

*All stand*

*Officiant* Lord, open our lips.

*People* ***And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.***

*Officiant and People*

***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.***

**Jubilate Psalm 100**

*Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands;  
serve the Lord with gladness  
and come before his presence with a song.*

*Know this: The Lord himself is God;  
he himself has made us, and we are his;  
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.*

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving;  
go into his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.*

*For the Lord is good;  
his mercy is everlasting;  
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.*

**Psalm 147:13-21**

13 Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem; \*  
praise your God, O Zion;

14 For he has strengthened the bars of your gates; \*  
he has blessed your children within you.

15 He has established peace on your borders; \*  
he satisfies you with the finest wheat.

16 He sends out his command to the earth, \*  
and his word runs very swiftly.

17 He gives snow like wool; \*  
he scatters hoarfrost like ashes.

18 He scatters his hail like bread crumbs; \*  
who can stand against his cold?

19 He sends forth his word and melts them; \*  
he blows with his wind, and the waters flow.

20 He declares his word to Jacob, \*  
his statutes and his judgments to Israel.

21 He has not done so to any other nation; \*  
to them he has not revealed his judgments.  
Hallelujah!

*At the end of the Psalms is sung or said*

***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.***

**[The people may be seated for the readings]**

## **The Word of God**

### **A Reading from the Book of Isaiah (61:10 - 62:3),**

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.  
For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,  
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,  
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,  
and her salvation like a burning torch.  
The nations shall see your vindication,  
and all the kings your glory;  
and you shall be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the Lord will give.  
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,  
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

*Reader*            **The Word of the Lord**

***People***            ***Thanks be to God***

## **Canticle 11 - The Third Song of Isaiah**

Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you.  
For behold, darkness covers the land;  
deep gloom enshrouds the peoples.  
But over you the Lord will rise,  
and his glory will appear upon you.  
Nations will stream to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawning.  
Your gates will always be open;  
by day or night they will never be shut.  
They will call you, The City of the Lord,  
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.  
Violence will no more be heard in your land,  
ruin or destruction within your borders.  
You will call your walls, Salvation,  
and all your portals, Praise.  
The sun will no more be your light by day;  
by night you will not need the brightness of the moon.  
The Lord will be your everlasting light,  
and your God will be your glory.

*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 Galatians (3:23 - 25; 4:4 - 7),**

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore, the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So, you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

*Reader*            The Word of the Lord

*People*      *Thanks be to God*

**A Reading from the Gospel of John (1:1 – 18),**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

*Reader*      The Word of the Lord

*People*      *Thanks be to God*

**Silent Reflection**

**The Apostles' Creed [Please stand, as you are able]**

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.*

*He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.*

*He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.*

*He descended to the dead.*

*On the third day he rose again.*

*He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.*

*He will come again to judge the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,*

*the holy catholic Church,*

*the communion of saints,*

*the forgiveness of sins,*

*the resurrection of the body,*

*and the life everlasting. Amen.*

## **The Prayers**

*The people stand or kneel*

*Officiant*      The Lord be with you.

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

*Officiant*      Let us pray.

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

*The Leader and People pray responsively*

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

***That we all may be one.***

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

***That your Name may be glorified by all people.***

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;

***That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.***

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;

***That there may be justice and peace on the earth.***

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

***That our works may find favor in your sight.***

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

***That they may be delivered from their distress.***

Give to the departed eternal rest;

***Let light perpetual shine upon them.***

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

***May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.***

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

*Silence*

*Members of the congregation may ask the prayers or the thanksgivings of those present*

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

On the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for Holy Trinity, Troy. We also pray for the staff and campers at Camp Marshall.

On our parish cycle of prayer, we pray for Sean and Yalita Brogan and Donn Bruggeman.



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.

*Silence*

*The Officiant adds a concluding 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.**

*Collect of the Day*

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*Collect for Sundays*

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*A Collect for Peace*

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Prayer for 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. **Amen.**

*A Collect for Regular Use during Sunday Worship by Congregations in Discernment*

Blessed God, you make all things new: Guide us as we seek your will for a new community of Word and Sacrament, that it may be leaven for the world's bread, and wine of delight for hearts in need; a gathering strong for service and glad in praise; and a people listening and responding to your presence in their midst; through Jesus our Redeemer and steadfast companion. **Amen.**

*Prayer for Mission*

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

**The Peace**

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

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People*      *And also with you.*

**Announcements**

**The General Thanksgiving**

*Officiant and People*

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks  
for all your goodness and loving-kindness  
to us and to all whom you have made.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
and all the blessings of this life;  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,  
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips, but in our lives,  
by giving up our selves to your service,  
and by walking before you  
in holiness and righteousness all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.*

*A Prayer of St. Chrysostom*

***Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.***

*Then may be said*

*Officiant*      Let us bless the Lord.

*People*          ***Thanks be to God.***

*The Officiant concludes with the following*

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. ***Amen.*** *Ephesians 3:20, 21*

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## Churchy Term of the Week – Christmas, or Christ’s Mass.

Christmas (in old English, *Cristes maesse*) is a festival celebrated on Dec. 25, commemorating the Incarnation of the Word of God in the birth of Jesus Christ. In the BCP it is also called The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In the United States it is also a popular secular holiday.

According to the Philocalian calendar, Christmas was first celebrated in Rome in the year 336. It gradually spread to the churches of the east, which already had a festival on Jan. 6 commemorating the manifestation of God in both the birth and baptism of Jesus. The date, Dec. 25, rests on no historical foundation. It was probably chosen to oppose the feast *Natalis Solis Invidi*, the birthday of the “Unconquerable Sun God” (Saturn), which took place at the winter solstice to celebrate the birth of “the Sun of Righteousness.”

The customs associated with Christmas have developed from many sources. From early days the popular observance of Christmas was marked by the joy and celebration characteristic of the Roman Saturnalia and the pagan festivals which it replaced. It came to include the decoration of houses with greenery and the giving of gifts to children and the poor. In Britain other observances were added including the Yule log and Yule cakes, fir trees, gifts, and greetings. Fires and lights (symbols of warmth and lasting life) and evergreens (symbols of survival) were traditionally associated with both pagan and Christian festivals. Their use developed considerably in England with the importation of German customs and through the influence of the writings of Charles Dickens.

In the BCP, Christmas Day is one of the seven principal feasts. The Christmas season lasts twelve days, from Christmas Day until Jan. 5, the day before the Epiphany. The season includes Christmas Day, the First Sunday after Christmas Day, the Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and may include the Second Sunday after Christmas Day. In many parishes, the main liturgical celebrations of Christmas take place on Christmas Eve. The BOS includes a variety of resources for use during Christmas, including a form for a Station at a Christmas Crèche, a form for a Christmas Festival of Lessons and Music, and seasonal blessings for use during the Christmas season.

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



Saint Stephen’s Episcopal Church is a part of the Episcopal Diocese of Montana

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