

THIRD SUNDAY IN

ADVENT

DECEMBER 14

A bouquet of purple crocuses is positioned in the bottom left corner of the image. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing their characteristic six-petaled shape and others still as buds. The green stems and leaves are visible, adding a natural touch to the design.

ST.
STEPHEN'S

[SSLV.ORG/ADVENT](https://sslv.org/advent)

WE LIGHT THE THIRD CANDLE

Reader: The third week of Advent we remember the gift of Joy we have in Christ. We remember the joy that Mary felt when the angel Gabriel told her that a special child would be born to her- a child who would save and deliver all people. Joy is the gift we all receive from the unconditional love Christ has for us.

Reader: God wants us all to have joy. The angel who announced to the shepherds that Jesus had been born told them: "Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people for to you is born this day, in the City of David, a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." As we light this candle, we remember that Christ came to bring true and everlasting joy to all people. As we light this candle, we are reminded that Christ came to save all people.

Reader lights the first two blue candles and the pink candle on the Advent Wreath.

When lighting your wreath at home, family members share how they have experienced joy today.

Reader: Let us pray- Loving God, we thank you for the joy you bring us. Help us prepare our hearts for the Lord's coming by helping us see that Christ came for every person we meet wherever we go. We ask this in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.



Worship Leaders December 14, 2025

Presider The Rev. Nic Mather

Musician. Riki Davis

Acolyte Esther Henriksen, Miles Henriksen

Altar Guild Robin Swecker, Michele Waite

Reader. Mary Lyons, Mary Hoover

Greeter. Janice Stixrud

Chalice Bearer. Lloyd Solon, Karen Miller

Usher. Greg Moore

Verger. Gary Beauregard

Vestry Presence. Robin Swecker, Katherine Beauregard

Coffee Hour Tosha Big Eagle

We as people of faith who are called to care for this creation want to respectfully **acknowledge the Cowlitz and Chinook People**, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations. We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. We are standing on the ancestral lands of the Cowlitz and Chinook People. We pay respects to their elders past and present. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today. And please join us in uncovering such truths.



St. Stephen's is a reconciling, affirming, and inclusive Christian community striving through worship, love and service to **welcome all people just as God created you**. No matter where you are on your journey of faith, and whether you are single, married, divorced, separated, or partnered, our welcome knows no boundaries of age, race, ethnicity, culture, political affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, economic condition, physical or mental ability. We believe that God delights in the diversity of creation and so do we!



Connect with St. Stephen's!

Please leave your name and email/phone number and Fr. Nic will connect with you this week with an invitation to enjoy a cup of coffee on us!

Your Name: _____

Your Phone Number: _____

Your Email: _____



Rejoice! rejoice, believers

The Hymnal 1982, #68

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line of each system. The first system includes three numbered verses. The second system continues the lyrics. The third system continues the lyrics. The fourth system concludes the hymn with a double bar line.

1 Re - joice! re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear!
2 See that your lamps are burn - ing, re - ple-nish them with oil;
3 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;

The eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
look now for your sal - va - tion, the end of sin and toil.
a - rise, thou Sun so longed for, a - bove this dark-ened sphere!

The Bride-groom is a - ris - ing, and soon he will draw nigh;
The mar - riage - feast is wait - ing, the gates wide o - pen stand;
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see

up, watch in ex - pec - ta - tion! at mid - night comes the cry.
rise up, ye heirs of glo - ry, the Bride-groom is at hand!
the day of earth's re - demp - tion, and ev - er be with thee!

Words: Laurentius Laurenti (1660-1722); tr. Sarah B. Findlater (1823-1907), alt. Music: *Llangloffan*, melody from *Hymnau a Thonau er Gwasanaeth yr Eglwys yng Nghymru*, 1865.

Blessed are you, holy and living One.
You come to your people and set them free.

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.**

Children are invited to follow the procession of the cross from the Church to the Parish Hall for Sunday School. While the program is geared for children 10 & under, ALL children are welcome to attend. Parents are also welcome to attend. Children will return to the church in time for Eucharist (typically returning after the passing of the peace).

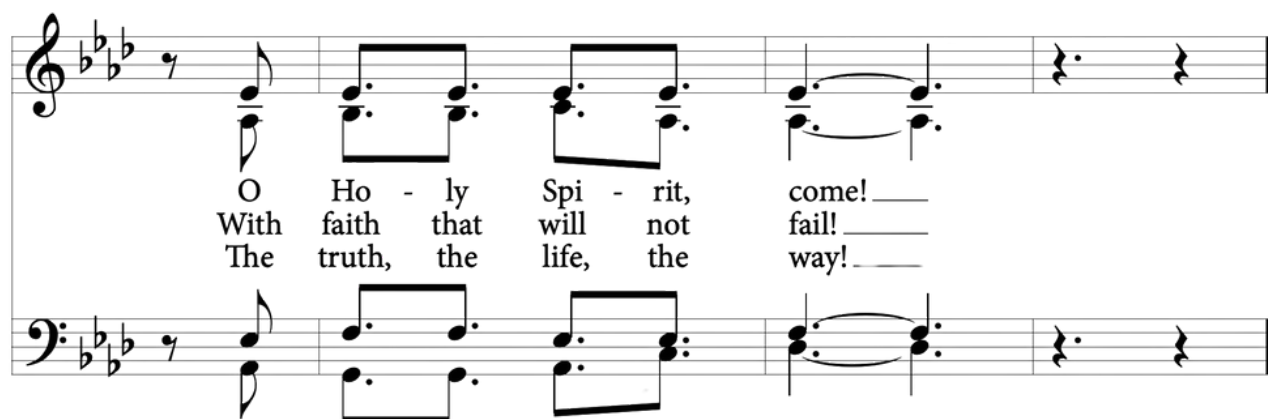
The Wind that Stirs the Sea to Sing



1. The wind that stirs the sea to sing, to surge and soar and drum,
 2. A - rise and blow from God's deep core, a stea - dy driv - ing gale, —
 3. Then with your flame and wind ig - nite the hope we sing and pray:



is e - choed in the prayer we bring: O Ho - ly Spi - rit, come!
 and fill this church for - e ver - more with faith that will not fail!
 that we will fol - low Christ the light, the truth, the life, the way!



O Ho - ly Spi - rit, come! ____
 With faith that will not fail! ____
 The truth, the life, the way! ____

Text: Thomas H. Troeger, b. 1945

Music: John Tirro, b. 1966

Text ©2015 Oxford University Press, Music ©2017 Mondo Zen Music.

The Liturgy of The Word

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A reading from Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;

like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.


They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,

with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."



*Jesus as a child at
The Creche
Orphanage
Bethlehem*

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;

the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;

the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;

they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;

everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

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

Canticle 15

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 Star in the
ceiling of a
shepherd's cave,
Bethlehem*



The Liturgy of The Word

A reading from James 5:7-10

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

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

*The Birthplace of
Christ, Church of
the Nativity,
Bethlehem*

Gospel Procession (before reading) & Recession (after reading)

(please stand in body or spirit)

O Come, O Come, Great Mystery Advent Gospel Acclamation

Al - le - lu ia Al - le - lu ia

O come, O come Great Mys - ter - y All

minds are op - en, hearts set free En - light - en us to hear your voice. Send

us all peace, and urge us to re - joice We wait, we hope, we

yearn, we pray for you to o - pen us and make all things new.

We wait, we hope, we yearn, we pray for you to

o - pen us and make all things new.

Al - le - lu ia Al - le - lu ia

Melody: VENI, EMMANUEL, French Procession, 15 cent.

Arrangement: Lacey Brown, b. 1981

Text: Lacey Brown, b. 1981

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The Holy Gospel of Our Savior Jesus Christ According to Matthew. Glory to you O Christ.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

“Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

The Gospel of Our Savior.
Praise to you O Christ.

Homily--Fr. Nic Mather

The Nicene Creed

(please stand in body or spirit)

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.

Prayers of the People

Celebrant: Lord who has created and loved us and who calls to us be still and wait. Heed our prayers as we say, Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Reader: Help us to hear and to accept gratefully your call to be God's people, ignoring the glory and favor of this world in favor of the glory of the kingdom of God. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Turn us away from our fears and division and teach us to embrace your promise, that ours might be a nation of hope and generosity. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Open our eyes to the majesty of your creation and strengthen our resolve to preserve its abundance for the sustenance of all future generations. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lead us to where your loving presence is most needed and help us to be your agents of love to our neighbors. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Enter in to the lives of all who suffer, that they might draw strength from your presence. Especially we ask for Ron & Harriet Byrnes, Reed Nunnelee, Jake Miller, Cheryl Karr, Don Willows, Mark Haase, Lois Larson, and those you now name silently or aloud. *Pause.*
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Deal tenderly with those who are grieving and with those whose wounds from loss are reopened at this time of year. May we feel the assurance of your promises that we will be reunited in your glorious presence in the new age. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Celebrant: Almighty God, in the face of Christ we see the fullness of your love for us, help us to be the people you created us to be and to live fully in the light of your countenance. All this we ask in the name of Lord, Jesus Christ who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, One God, now and always. **Amen.**

Confession & Absolution (please kneel in body or spirit)

Let us confess our sins to God

**God of all mercy,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.**

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

The Peace (please stand in body or spirit)

The Peace of Christ be always with you. **And also with you!**

The Offertory

God of our future, whose compassion is unlimited, all that we have is yours and to you we shall render account for all you have given us. As we offer you these gifts we enjoy from your bounty, grant that we may live well, love generously, and seek first your kingdom, on earth as in heaven, through Jesus Christ our most kind Judge and Savior. **Amen.**

Offertory Music--

"Gesu Bambino"
arr. Sally Deford
Bell Choir
Simon Nissen, Viola

HOLY EUCHARIST

(please stand in body or spirit)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right, and good and joyful, to give you thanks, all-holy God, source of life and fountain of mercy. 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, joining with Angels and Archangels and with the faithful of every generation, we lift our voices with all creation as we sing:

Sanctus

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and God of
might. Hea - ven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - sa - nah in the
high - est. Blest is He com - ing in the name of the Lord. Ho - sa - nah
in the high - est. Ho - sa - nah in the high - est.

Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of the universe and giver of life. You formed us in your own image and called us to dwell in your infinite love. You gave the world into our care that we might be your faithful stewards and show forth your bountiful grace. But we failed to honor your image in one another and in ourselves; we would not see your goodness in the world around us; and so we violated your creation, abused one another, and rejected your love. Yet you never ceased to care for us, and prepared the way of salvation for all people.

Through Abraham and Sarah you called us into covenant with you. You delivered us from slavery, sustained us in the wilderness, and raised up prophets to renew your promise of salvation. Then, in the fullness of time, you sent your eternal Word, made mortal flesh in Jesus. Born into the human family, and dwelling among us, he revealed your glory. Giving himself freely to death on the cross, he triumphed over evil, opening the way of freedom and life.

On the night before he died for us, Our Savior Jesus Christ took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his friends, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus 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 poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Remembering his death and resurrection we now present to you from your creation this bread and this wine.

By your Holy Spirit may they be for us the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. Grant that we who share these gifts may be filled with the Holy Spirit and live as Christ's Body in the world. Bring us into the everlasting heritage of your daughters and sons, that with the Blessed Mother Mary, Stephen and all your saints, past, present, and yet to come, we may praise your Name for ever.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. **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.**

Fraction (to the tune of Greensleeves)

**What feast of love is offered here
What banquet come from heaven?
What food of everlasting life
What gracious gift is given?
This, this is Christ the king,
The bread come down from heaven.
Oh, taste and see and sing!
How sweet the manna given!**

The Gifts of God, for the People of God.

You are invited to come forward and receive Eucharist at this time. We will be sharing wine from a common chalice, so if you would prefer intinction please leave the bread in your hand and the chalice minister will intinct for you. Gluten free communion is available and a non-alcoholic option in place of the wine is also available upon request.

For those joining via Live-Stream: A Prayer for a Person Unable to Take the Eucharist by St. Alphonsus de Liguori, 1696-1787

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.

Prayer for Eucharistic Visitor

As you go to the sick and homebound, take with you not only the sacrament that we have celebrated, but also the Word of God which we have heard, as well as the affection of this parish community. Ask for the prayers of those whom you visit in return. Go, now, with God's peace and blessing. **Amen.**

Comfort, My People



1. Com - fort, my peo - ple, and calm all your
 2. Si - lence the thun - der, si - lence sounds of
 (3.) light in the dark - ness; be truth for our



fear; the day of sal - va - tion is
 war. End all de - struc - tion and
 lives. Be strength for the help - less, the



quick-ly draw - ing near. The One you long to
 com - fort those who mourn. Your dream draws
 poor and lost who cry. O sav - ing



see will soon set you free.
 near; your vi - sion is here.
 voice, O liv - ing choice,



O come, Lord Je - sus, come.



O come, Lord Je - sus, come.



1., 2. D.C. 3.

3. Be

Postcommunion

(please stand in body or spirit)

God of abundance,
you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of salvation;
you have united us with Christ and one another;
and you have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth.
Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit,
that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world
and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior.
Amen.

Holy eternal Majesty, Holy incarnate Word, Holy abiding Spirit, Bless you for evermore. **Amen.**

Let us go forth in the name of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

Following the closing hymn you are invited to join us in the Parish Hall for Coffee Hour! If you are new today, please take a welcome packet and coffee mug (found at the front door)!

Prepare the way, O Zion

The Hymnal 1982, #65



- 1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!
2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.
3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sa - vior's rule em - brace.



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.
His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.
His tid - ings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.
All lands will bow be - fore him, their voic - es will a - dore him.



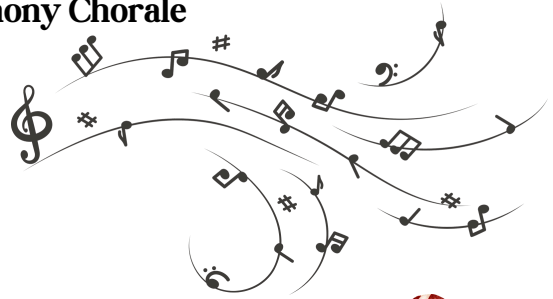
Oh, blest is Christ that came in God's most ho - ly name.

Words: Frans Mikael Franzen (1772-1847); tr. composite; adapt. Charles P. Price (1920-1999). Copyright © 1982, Charles P. Price. Music: *Bereden väg för Herran*, melody from *Then Swenska Psalmboken*, 1697; harm. *Koralbok för Svenska Kyrkan*, 1939, alt.

Save the Dates:

- **Southwest Washington Symphony and Symphony Chorale Christmas Concerts**

- Sunday, December 14 @ 3pm
- Longview Community Church



- **Cocoa, Cookies, & Carols, Sunday December 14, 6-8pm**
 - ALL are welcome and invited!
 - YOU bring the cookies, WE provide the Cocoa & Carols!



- **Children's Christmas Pageant, Sunday December 21, 10:30am**
 - All children welcome and encouraged to participate
 - Pageant Rehearsal and Festive Family Breakfast @ 9am



- **Christmas Eve, Lessons & Carols with Holy Eucharist, 12/24, 4pm**
- **Christmas Day, Family-Friendly Eucharist, 12/25, 10:30am**



- **January Newcomers Class: Sundays in January @ Coffee Hour**
 - Soup Lunch Provided
 - Learn about the Episcopal Church & St. Stephen's
 - See Mary Lyons or Fr. Nic to RSVP



- **Reel Theology Returns in January**

- Sundays 1/11, 1/18, 2/1 @ 6pm
- Join us as we watch films exploring the Immigrant Experience

