

**December 22, 2024  
10:00 AM**

**The Fourth Sunday  
of Advent**

## **Morning Prayer**



### ***St. Stephen's in-the-Field Episcopal Church***

7269 Santa Teresa Boulevard  
San Jose, CA 95139  
(408) 629-1836  
[www.ssitf.org](http://www.ssitf.org)

**We the people of Saint Stephen's in-the-Field  
seek to know Christ, to share Christ, and to serve Christ,  
recognizing his presence in all people,  
and reaching out in love to each other and to the world around us.**

**Opening Hymn:** Open Our Eyes, Lord – YSB page 42

### ***Advent Candle Lighting***

*Leader:* The light shines in the darkness

*All:* **And the darkness has not overcome it**

*Reader:* On this Fourth Sunday of Advent we light these four candles to remind us of the Light that shines in the world; the Light that we wait for; the Light that is coming: Jesus our Redeemer.

*(Light the candles)*

*Presider:* Let us pray,

*All:* **Let these candles, O Lord, be a reminder that you are Emmanuel – God With Us, and because of your Holy Presence among us always, there is no reason to ever be afraid; Restore us, O God of hosts, and let Your light shine within us. In the Name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.**

### ***Opening Sentence***

*Officiant:* Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

### ***Confession***

*Officiant:* Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

**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**

### ***Absolution***

*Officiant:* 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.**

***Opening Versicle*** (*stand*)

*Officiant:* Lord, open our lips.

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

**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.**

***Invitatory Psalm***

*Officiant:* The mercy of the Lord is everlasting:

*People:* **Come let us adore him.**

***Venite Psalm 95:1-7***

*Officiant and people*

**Come, let us sing to the Lord:\***

**Let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.**

**Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving\***

**And raise a loud shout to him with psalms.**

**For the Lord is a great God,\***

**And a great King above all gods.**

**In his hand are the caverns of the earth,\***

**And the heights of the hills are his also.**

**The sea is his, for he made it,\***

**And his hands have molded the dry land.**

**Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee,\***

**And kneel before the Lord our Maker.**

**For he is our God,**

**and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.\***

**Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!**

***Canticle 15:***

***The Song of Mary***

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.**

*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. Alleluia.**

***The Lessons*** *(please be seated)*

***First Reading***

***Micah 5:2-5a***

A reading from the Prophet Micah.

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.

The Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

***Second Reading***

***Hebrews 10:5-10***

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

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.

The Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand*

***Gospel Gradual:*** Pass It On – YSB page 44

## ***Gospel Reading***

*Luke 1:39-55*

A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

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."

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

The word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God**

***Sermon:*** *Reflections at the End*, by Ben E. Helmer

***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, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
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,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and 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***

*Officiant* The Lord be with you.

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

*Officiant* Let us pray.

***Lord's Prayer***

**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.**

## ***Suffrages***

*Leader:* Show us your mercy, O Lord;

*People:* **And grant us your salvation.**

*Leader:* Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

*People:* **Let your people sing with joy.**

*Leader:* Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

*People:* **For only in you can we live in safety.**

*Leader:* Lord, keep this nation under your care;

*People:* **And guide us in the way of justice and truth.**

*Leader:* Let your way be known upon earth;

*People:* **Your saving health among all nations.**

*Leader:* Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

*People:* **Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**

*Leader:* Create in us clean hearts, O God;

*People:* **And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.**

## ***Collect of the Day***

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.**

## ***Prayers of the People*** *(please stand as you are able)*

*Leader:* Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

In the diocesan cycle of prayer, we pray for St. Stephen's of San Luis Obispo, St. Stephen's of Gilroy, and St. Stephen's in-the-Field of San Jose.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

*People:* **Hear our prayer.**



*Leader:* Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

***People:* Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

***People:* Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

***People:* Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

*Silence*

*(You are invited to offer your own petitions either silently or aloud.)*

Lord, in your mercy

***People:* Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

*Silence*

*(You are invited to offer your own petitions either silently or aloud.)*

Lord, in your mercy

***People:* Hear our prayer.**

***All:* God and Father of all, hear our prayers for all in need and fill your hungry people with bread from heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## *The Peace*

*Officiant:* The peace of the Lord be always with you.

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

*Exchange peace.*

*Offertory:* Spirit Song – YSB page 51

## *Doxology (Old 100<sup>th</sup>):*

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;

praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A - men.

## *The General Thanksgiving*

**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.**

### *Announcements (please be seated)*

### *Prayers for Celebrations*

**Loving Creator, You are the source of life and the source of love. We thank you for all who celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, and special events today. Watch over them as their days increase, bless and guide them wherever they may be. May your peace which passes understanding abide all the days of their lives, and may your love for the world shine through them and the deep relationships they cherish, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

*Please stand*

### *Concluding Versicle and Response*

*Officiant* Let us bless the Lord.

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

### *Concluding Sentence*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

***Mission Song:*** Spirit of the Living God – YSB page 50

## **Mark your calendar**

- Wednesday Book Group, every Wednesday morning at St. John's, 11am
- Saturday, January 4<sup>th</sup> – Epiphany dinner, 6pm

## **Vestry Members**

Janet Thorsrud & Susan Zaballos, *Senior Wardens* •  
Rob van der Molen, *Junior Warden* • Anthony Francis •  
Andy Lief, *Treasurer/Finance* • Maggie Stedman, *Clerk*