

The Third Sunday of Advent

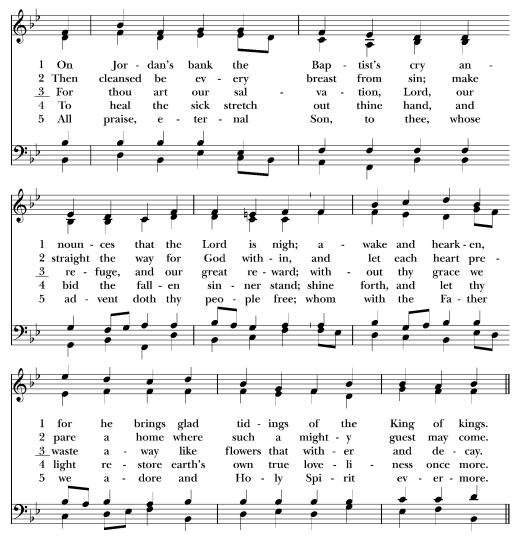
Sunday, December 14, 2025
The Holy Eucharist Rite One
9:30 a.m.

Welcome visitors and newcomers; we are glad you are here! If you would like more information about the community of St. Thomas, please speak to a greeter or a member of the clergy. To receive information by email, please fill out a visitor card found in the pew and give to an usher or place in the offering plate.

Entrance Hymn 76

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry

Winchester New



Opening Acclamation (BCP p. 323)

The people standing, the Celebrant says

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

People And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Celebrant says

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen*.

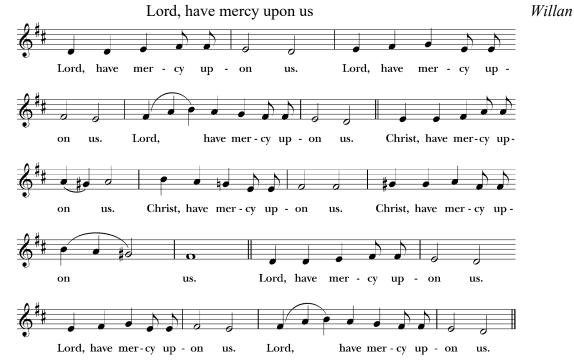
Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

The following is sung, all standing



S 91



The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And with thy spirit.

Celebrant Let us pray.

Stir up thy power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let thy bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honor and glory, world without end. *Amen*.

The Lessons

The people sit.

A Reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah [35:1-10]

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom;

like the crocus ²it 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.

³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say 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."

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then 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; ⁷the 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.

⁸A 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.

⁹No 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. ¹⁰And 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.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

Silence may follow.

The Song of Mary Magnificat Luke 1:46-55

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.

The people sit.

A Reading from the letter of James [5:7-10]

⁷Be 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. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

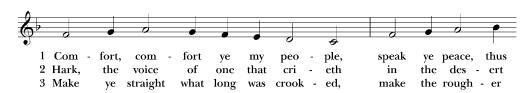
Reader The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

Silence may follow.

Sequence Hymn 67 All stand.

Comfort, comfort ye my people

Psalm 42





All stand.

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew [11:2-11]

People Glory be to thee, O Lord.

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ 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. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷As 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? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹Truly 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."

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.
People Praise be to thee, O Christ.

The Sermon

The Creed

All stand.

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.

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the Church and the world, saying, "Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come."

Come thou long expected Jesus, born to set our people free; from our sins and fears release us, let us find our rest in thee.

Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come.

We pray for the Church in all times and all places. May grace be upon and prepare us in all that we do; bring us your Peace that passes all understanding, we beseech you.

Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come.

Comfort, Comfort, ye my people, speak ye peace saith our God; comfort those who sit in darkness, mourning "neath their sorrows" load.

Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come.

May grace prepare all in need of healing or special care; we ask for the peace that passes all understanding be their comforting prayer.

Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come.

O Come, Desire of nations bind in one hearts of mankind.

Bid our sad divisions cease, and be thyself our King of Peace.

Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come.

May grace prepare us in our national discourse. We ask for your peace that passes all understanding to ever be our recourse.

Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come.

Savior of the nations come; show the glory of the Son.

Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come.

We pray for Donald, our president, for all courts and legislatures.

May grace in public policy be supplied. We ask for your peace that passes all understanding to abide.

Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come.

The Advent of our God, our prayers must now employ and we must meet him on his road with hymns of holy joy *Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come.*

May grace sustain all who travel near and far. We ask for your peace that passes all understanding to be every traveler's star

Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come.

The saints, who here in patience their cross and suff'rings bore, shall live and reign forever, when sorrow is no more *Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come.*

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king; born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring *Prepare us, O Christ for your kingdom come.*

I invite any other prayers of intercession or thanksgiving, silently or aloud.

Silence. The People may offer their own prayers.

Presider

Prepare us, Lord, your kingdom to come. Give us grace for your saints to be. Strengthen us to be prepared to love and serve you with dignity. In your coming may we be prepared to be your servants every day with the peace which passes all understanding, preparing us to lead the way; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Confession of Sin

The Deacon or Celebrant says

Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against thee
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved thee with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in thy will,
and walk in thy ways,
to the glory of thy Name. Amen

The Priest stands and says

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*.

Hear the Word of God to all who truly turn to him.

Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Matthew 11:28

All stand.

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And with thy spirit.

Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

The Holy Communion



Necessary announcements may be made; the people may be seated.

The people stand as the offerings are brought forward. Online Offerings: Scan the QR Code or click the Donate Button on our website (<u>www.stthomascamden.org</u>)

The Celebrant says

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good thy vows unto the Most High. Psalm 50:14

Offertory Hymn 437

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord

Birmingham





The Great Thanksgiving

The People remain standing.

CelebrantThe Lord be with you.PeopleAnd with thy spirit.CelebrantLift up your hearts.

People We lift them up unto the Lord.

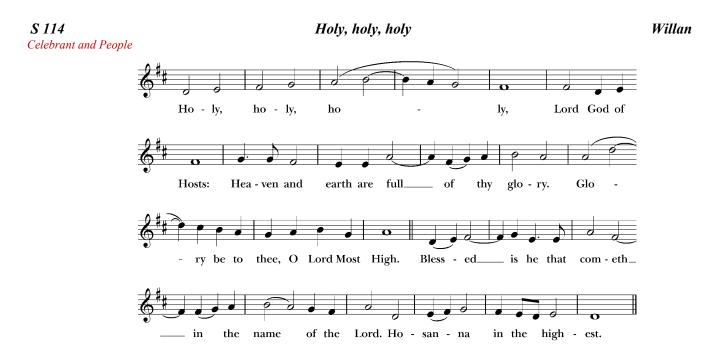
Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People It is meet and right so to do.

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God.

Because thou didst send thy 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 with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying,



The people kneel or stand.

Then the Celebrant continues

All glory be to thee, O Lord our God, for that thou didst create heaven and earth, and didst make us in thine own image; and, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him, and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption. He made there a full and perfect sacrifice for the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.

For in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread; and when he had given thanks to thee, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Likewise, after supper, he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink this, all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me."

Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, we thy people do celebrate and make, with these thy holy gifts which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; and looking for his coming again with power and great glory.

And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us, and, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, to bless and sanctify these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the Body and Blood of thy dearly-beloved Son Jesus Christ.

And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, whereby we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies. Grant, we beseech thee, that all who partake of this Holy Communion may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, and be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction; and also that we and all thy whole Church may be made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord;

By whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. *AMEN*.

The Celebrant then continues

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

People and Celebrant

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,
forever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace

The Celebrant says

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

After Communion, the Celebrant says

Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom.

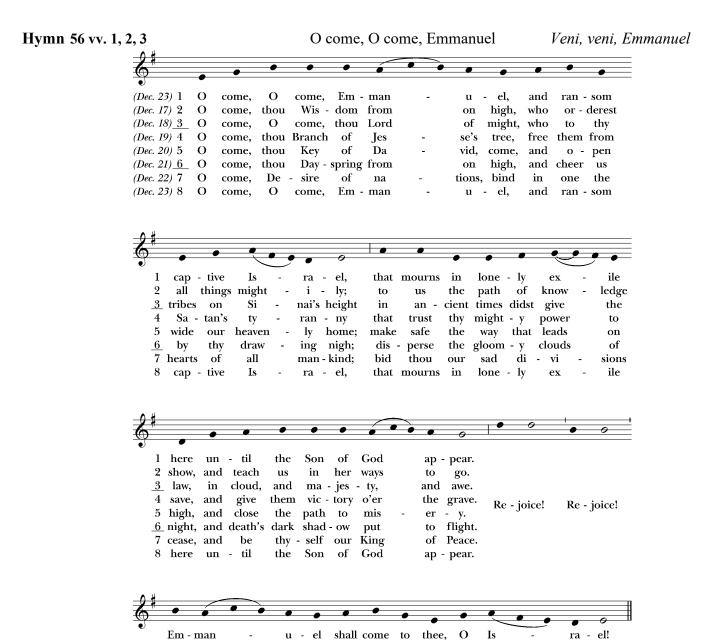
And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. *Amen*.

The priest blesses the people, saying

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*.

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People Thanks be to God.



The stanzas may be used as antiphons with "The Song of Mary" on the dates given.

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Liturgical Ministers

Celebrant and Preacher: The Rev. Paul Briggs
Guest pianist: Lizzie Danchi
Eucharistic Minister: Benjy Lowry, Shelly Gallender

Readers: Amy Frankel, Sue Foltz Prayers of the People: Sarah Groman Ushers: Jim Ebbert, Lucy Ebbert

People in our Prayers

Healing: Bill, Jan, Marieda Hunt, Patrick Coleman, Jan L., Miriam, The Nisbet Family, Wendy, Jeff, Sandra Covington, Peter Walker, Br. Richard Biernacki BSG, Jeff, David Bridges, Kathy Bridges, Donald, Diana Mohr, Gwen, Charles Lewis, Jeanie, Timothy Jackson, Catherine, Kristina Shea, Tony, Mya Delisle, Andrew Moran, Donovan, Debra and Amy, Ned and Kathleen Bachus, Anna and her child Brody, Ruth Tolman, Helene, John, Phyllis, Michael, Bob, Sylvia, Marlene, Percy, Joan Grey, Cathy, James, Ken, Joseph, Jo Panayotoff, Joyce S, Jan Schaefer, Christine & Paul M, Jason, Kristen, Jeanie, Cathie, Brian, Bob S., Gary P., Gay Schueler, Pat Medley, Timothy Darling, Leah, Sandy, Ezra, Chris Strazzulla, Fr. Tom Pike, Evie Bridges, Luke Morelli, Tim Peters, Janice Boetsch, Lucy Ebbert, Shirley, Budge Walen, Chris, Vicki Boetsch, Catherine G, Annabel, Pam Kaler, Margery, Stephanie, Anne Crawford Collins

December Birthdays: Melinda Wildes (18), Susan Foltz (20), Gwen Prosser (22), Pat Ayers (22), Anna Black (22), Chris Glass (27), Millie Crocker (28), and Bobby Purkey (31)

Diocese Cycle of Prayer: St. Columba's, Boothbay Harbor, For those grieving the loss of a loved one this holiday season

Announcements

Help us build a stronger and more vibrant congregation! We need your input to the Congregational Assessment Tool, affectionately known as the CAT. Watch for the link on January 4. The 88 question survey must be completed no later than January 28, 2026. Paper copies will be made available upon request.

Christmas Pageant rehearsal will be held after the Liturgy December 14 and 21. See Anne Rogers Popejoy for details.

Please remember to return your offerings for Christmas Flowers and Greens no later than December 18 so we can include names in the bulletins for Christmas Eve.

Mark your calendar: Annual Parish Meeting will follow Morning Prayer on January 25.

This Week at St. Thomas'

Sunday, December 14:

9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I (Coffee Hour follows in Parish Hall)
Pageant Rehearsal after Liturgy
4:00 p.m. Centering Prayer (Lady Chapel)

Wednesday, December 10:

9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Healing 11:00 a.m. Bible Study *(online)*

Sunday, December 21:

9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I (Coffee Hour follows in Parish Hall)
Greening of the Church and Pageant Rehearsal after the Liturgy
4:00 p.m. Centering Prayer (Lady Chapel)

A.A. meetings are held daily at 6:30 p.m.

Church Staff and Parish Officers

Kayla Clay, Parish Administrator admin@stthomascamdenme.org
Office: 207-236-3680

The Rev. Paul Briggs, Interim Rector interimrector@stthomascamdenme.org (860) 384-9193

The Rev. Kristen Burkholder, Deacon deacon@stthomascamdenme.org (207) 322-7816

The Rev. Dr. Rosalee Glass, *Deacon Emeritus*Tony Coyne, *Sexton*Elizabeth Moran, *Senior Warden*Br. Donovan Bowley, BSG, *Junior Warden*Terry Mello, *Treasurer*Anne Rogers-Popejoy, *Vestry Clerk*



St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

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