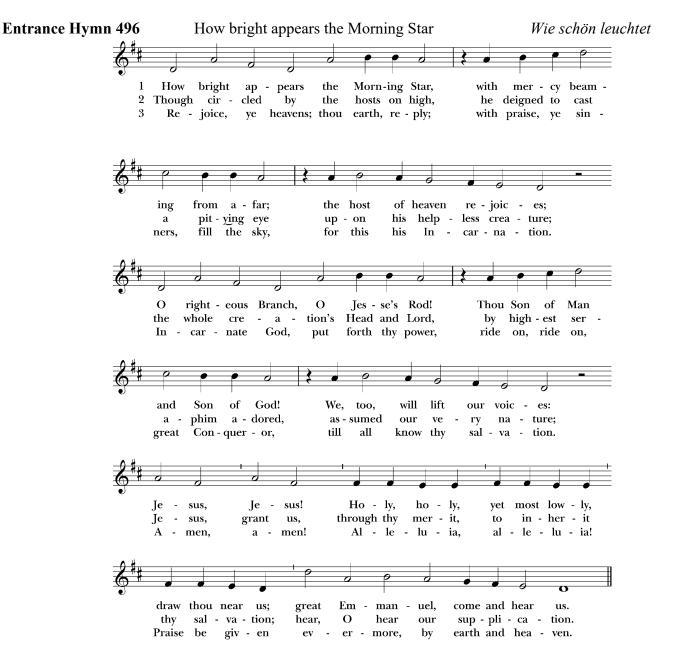


The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 21, 2025 9:30 a.m.

The Holy Eucharist Rite One

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.



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.

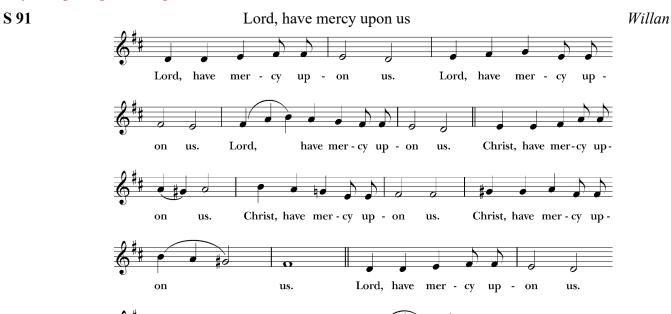
The Celebrant says

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



us.

The Collect of the Day

CelebrantThe Lord be with you.PeopleAnd with thy spirit.

Celebrant Let us pray.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, to purify our consciences by thy daily visitation, that when thy Son our Lord cometh he may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen*.

Lord,

have mer - cy up - on

us.

The Lessons

The people sit.

A Reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah [7:10-16]

Lord, have mer-cy up - on

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. ¹³Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

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

Silence may follow.

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

Remain seated.

¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; * shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

²In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, * stir up your strength and come to help us.

³Restore us, O God of hosts; *

show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

⁴O LORD God of hosts, *

how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?

⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears; * you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

⁶You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *

and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts; *

show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

¹⁶Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, * the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.

¹⁷And so will we never turn away from you; * give us life, that we may call upon your Name.

¹⁸Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; *

show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

The people sit.

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Rome [1:1-7]

¹Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

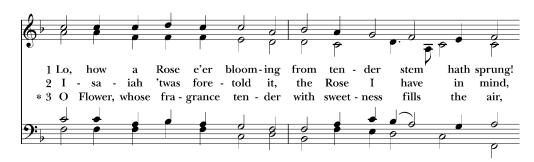
Reader The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

Silence may follow.

Sequence Hymn 81 All stand.

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming

Es ist ein Ros





All stand.

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew [1:18-25]

People Glory be to thee, O Lord.

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,

and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

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

Celebrant People The peace of the Lord be always with you.

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 (www.stthomascamden.org)

The Celebrant says



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.

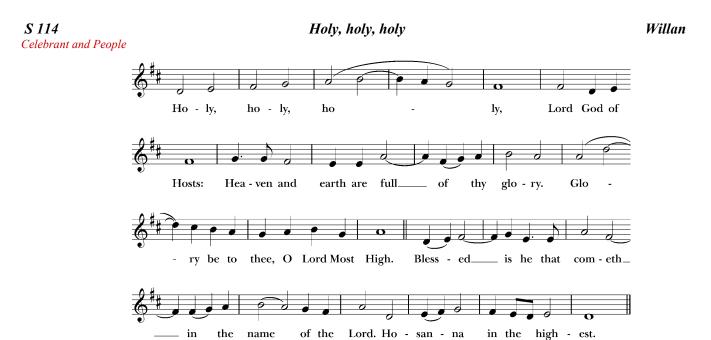
Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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





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*.

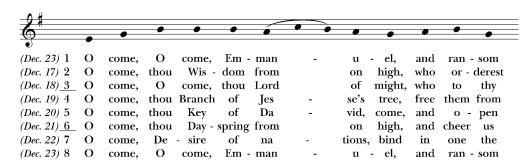
Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

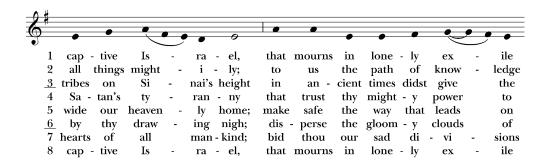
People Thanks be to God.

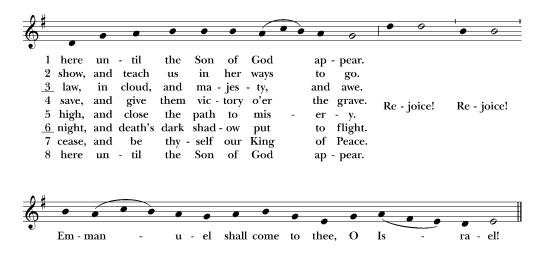
Hymn 56 vv. 6, 7, 8

O come, O come, Emmanuel

Veni, veni, Emmanuel







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
Deacon: The Rev. Kristen Burkholder
Guest music: Ami Wolovitz, violin; Ina Wolovitz, piano
Eucharistic Minister: Derek Reed, Jacqueline Recht
Readers: Doc Wallace, Haunani Wallace
Prayers of the People: Bill Freeman
Ushers: Cheryl Reif, Dwayne Robinson

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. Matthew's, Lisbon Falls, For our neighbors in the United Methodist Church, For peace throughout the world

This Week at St. Thomas'

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)

Christmas Eve, December 24:

4 p.m. Christmas Pageant and Eucharist, Rite II; Lizzie Danchi, Guest Pianist 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. – A.A. Christmas Eve Gratitude Meeting 10 p.m. Festival Candlelight Eucharist, Rite I (incense will be used at this service) The Rev. Paul Briggs, Celebrant & Preacher; Dr. James Higdon, Guest Organist

Sunday, December 28:

9:30 a.m. Festival of Christmas Lessons and Carols
The Rev. Kristen Burkholder, Officiant; Lizzie Danchi, Guest Pianist (Coffee Hour follows in Parish Hall)
4:00 p.m. Centering Prayer (Lady Chapel)

UPCOMING:

January 4-28:

CAT (Congregational Assessment Tool) Survey Online, paper copies available upon request

January 11:

Inquirer's Classes begin following the 9:30 a.m. Liturgy

January 25:

Annual Parish Meeting following the 9:30 a.m. Morning Prayer

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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