St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

The Church on Main Street, where God's love is lived.

CELEBRATING 175 YEARS (1851 - 2026)

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
WISDOM SUNDAY

Sunday, November 8, 2026

Holy Eucharist, Rite II at 10:00am

Welcome to St. Stephen's Church. We are delighted that you are here.

The second Sunday of the month we have our "Second Sunday Intergenerational Service." Our children and youth join us for the entirety of the service, with some serving as liturgical ministers. We use child-specific resources for some of the readings and prayers, and make other changes so the liturgy is more accessible to the younger among us

All of what you need to join us is in this bulletin or in one of two hymnals:

Hymnal 1982 (the blue book)
"H" followed by a number indicates hymns.
"S" followed by a number indicates selections that appear in the front section of the blue hymnal.

St. Stephen's Hymnal (the red spiral bound book):
"SSH" followed by a number indicates hymns.

PRELUDE

Gather
We come together to praise God.

Please stand as you are able.

GATHERING HYMN
H 68 Rejoice! rejoice, believers *Llangloffan*



WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

As our nights grow longer and our days grow short, we look on these earthly signs--light and green branches-- and remember God's promise to our world: Christ, our Light and our Hope, will come. Listen to the words of Solomon:

"O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy, who have made all things by your word, and by your wisdom have formed humankind to have dominion over the creatures you have made, and rule the world in holiness and righteousness, and pronounce judgment in uprightness of soul, give me the wisdom that sits by your throne, and do not reject me from among your servants…. With you is wisdom, she who knows your works and was present when you made the world; she understands what is pleasing in your sight and what is right according to your

commandments. Send her forth from the holy heavens, and from the throne of your glory send her, that she may labor at my side, and that I may learn what is pleasing to you."
(Wisdom of Solomon 9:1-4, 9-10)

God is the source of our life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:30)

Candle is lit while the congregation sings.

H 56, st. 2 O come, thou Wisdom from on high *Veni, veni Emmanuel*

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
who orderest all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Word

We hear and respond to the story of God's liberating acts.

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

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Jesus said, "The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord your God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31)

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 GLORIA

From *St. Stephen Mass* *Warren Michel Swenson*





From *St. Stephen Mass,* composed for the 150th anniversary of St. Stephen's Church, Millburn, NJ

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

God be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

Eternal God, your Word of wisdom goes forth and does not return empty: Grant us such knowledge and love of you that we may perceive your presence in all creation and every creature; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated.

THE PSALM

Let us read responsively Psalm 70. 70 *ICB*

God, save me.
Lord, hurry to help me.
People are trying to kill me.
Shame them and disgrace them.
People want to hurt me.
Let them run away in disgrace.
God, save me.
Lord, hurry to help me.

People make fun of me.
Stop them and make them ashamed.
But let all the people who worship you
rejoice and be glad.
Let the people who love your salvation
always say, "Praise the greatness of God."
God, save me.
Lord, hurry to help me.

I am poor and helpless.
God, hurry to me.
You help me and save me.
Lord, do not wait.
God, save me.
Lord, hurry to help me.

THE LESSON

A reading from the first letter to the Thessalonians. 4:13-18 *ICB adapted*

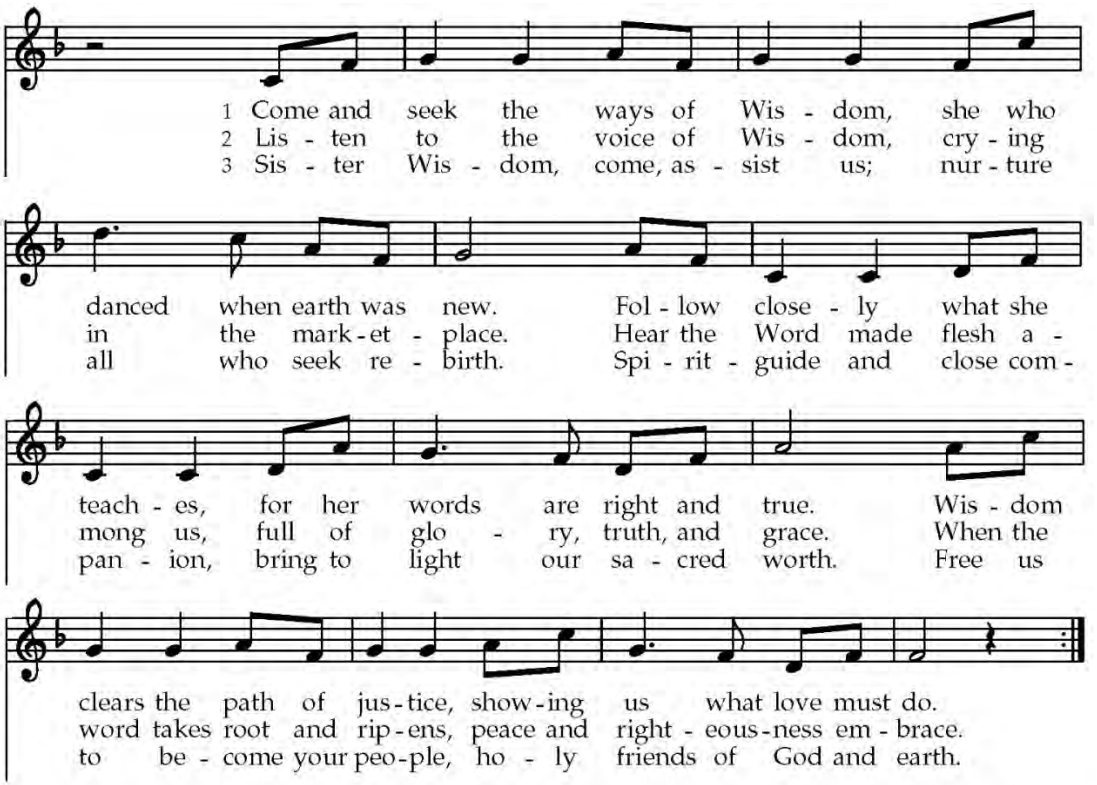
Brothers and sisters, we want you to know about those who have died. We do not want you to be sad as others who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and that he rose again. So, because of Jesus, God will bring together with Jesus those who have died. What we tell you now is the Lord's own message. We who are living now may still be living when the Lord comes again. We who are living at that time will be with the Lord, but not before those who have already died. The Lord himself will come down from heaven. There will be a loud command with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God. And those who have died and were in Christ will rise first. After that, those who are still alive at that time will be gathered up with them. We will be taken up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with the Lord forever. So comfort each other with these words.

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

Please stand as you are able.

SEQUENCE HYMN

SSH 15 Come and seek the ways of Wisdom *Julion*



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THE GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew. 25:1-13 *ICB*
Glory to you, Lord Christ.

"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten girls who went to wait for the bridegroom. They took their lamps with them. Five of the girls were foolish and five were wise. The five foolish girls took their lamps, but they did not take more oil for the lamps to burn. The wise girls took their lamps and more oil in jars. The bridegroom was very late. All the girls became sleepy and went to sleep.

"At midnight someone cried out, 'The bridegroom is coming! Come and meet him!' Then all the girls woke up and got their lamps ready. But the foolish girls said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil. Our lamps are going out.' The wise girls answered, 'No! The oil we have might not be enough for all of us. Go to the people who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

"So the five foolish girls went to buy oil. While they were gone, the bridegroom came. The girls who were ready went in with the bridegroom to the wedding feast. Then the door was closed and locked.

"Later the others came back. They called, 'Sir, sir, open the door to let us in.' But the bridegroom answered, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'

"So always be ready. You don't know the day or the time the Son of Man will come.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Please be seated.

THE SERMON *The Rev Paula J. Toland*

Please stand as you are able.

THE NICENE CREED *Enriching Our Worship*

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, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. 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, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who 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.

ADVENT LITANY OF DARKNESS AND LIGHT *Rowthorn*

In this Advent season, we will pray this litany, holding in our hearts those on our parish prayer list and in the Diocesan and Anglican Communion cycles of prayer. The names of those for whom we pray are found in this bulletin after the Postlude.

Presider
We wait in the darkness, expectantly, longingly, anxiously, thoughtfully.

Intercessor
The darkness is our friend. In the darkness of the womb, we have all been nurtured and protected. In the darkness of the womb, the Christ-child was made ready for the journey into light.

People
You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

It is only in the darkness that we can see the splendor of the universe – blankets of stars, the solitary glowings of distant planets.

It was the darkness that allowed the Magi to find the start that guided them to where the Christ-child lay.

You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

In the darkness of the night, desert people find relief from the cruel relentless heat of the sun.

In the blessed darkness, Mary and Joseph were able to flee with the infant Jesus to safety in Egypt.

You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

In the darkness of sleep, we are soothed and restored, healed and renewed.

In the darkness of sleep, dreams rise up. God spoke to Jacob and Joseph through dreams. God is speaking still.

You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

In the solitude of darkness, we sometimes remember those who need God's presence in a special way – the sick, the unemployed, the bereaved, the persecuted, the homeless, those who are demoralized and discouraged, those whose fear has turned to cynicism, those whose vulnerability has become bitterness.

Sometimes in the darkness, we remember those near to our hearts – colleagues, partners, parents, children, neighbors, friends. We thank God for their presence and ask God to bless and protect them in all that they do – at home, at school, as they travel, as they work, as they play.

You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

Sometimes, in the solitude of darkness, our fears and concerns, our hopes and our visions rise to the surface. We come face to face with ourselves and with the road that lies ahead of us. And in that same darkness, we find companionship for the journey.

In that same darkness, we sometimes allow ourselves to wonder and worry whether the human race is going to make it at all.

We know that you are with us, O God, yet we still await your coming.

In the darkness that contains both our hopelessness and our expectancy, we watch for a sign of God's Hope. Amen.

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be always with you.
And also with you.

Table

We offer our gifts, give thanks, and we gather at Christ's banquet.

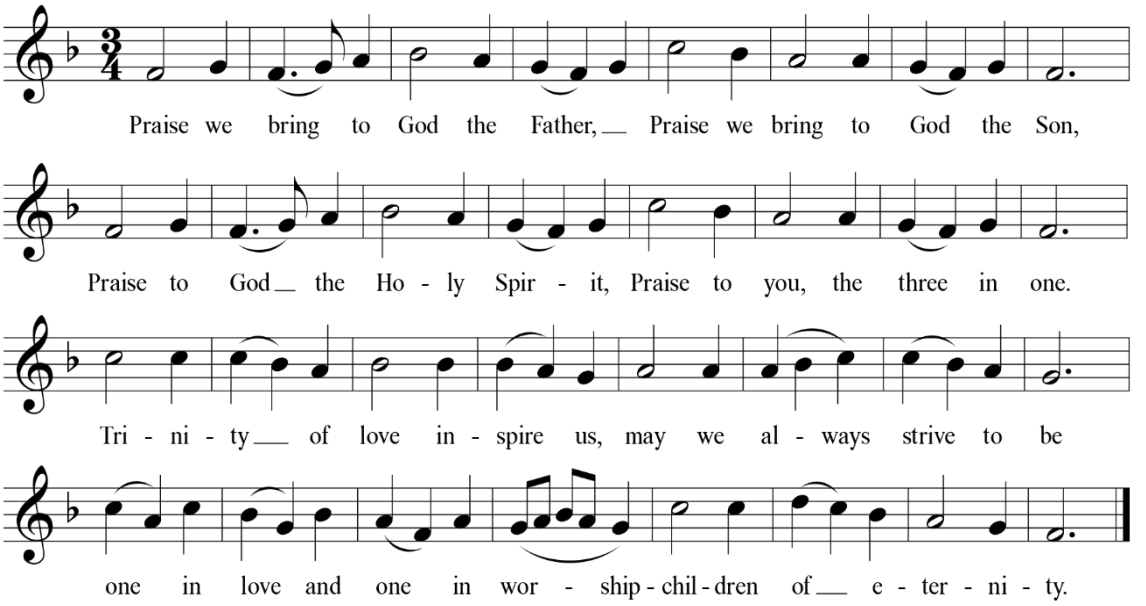
Please be seated.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Zion hears the watchmen singing — *J.S. Bach*
Senior Choir

THE DOXOLOGY

Praise we bring to God the Father



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EUCHARISTIC PRAYER — *EOW1 EP3*

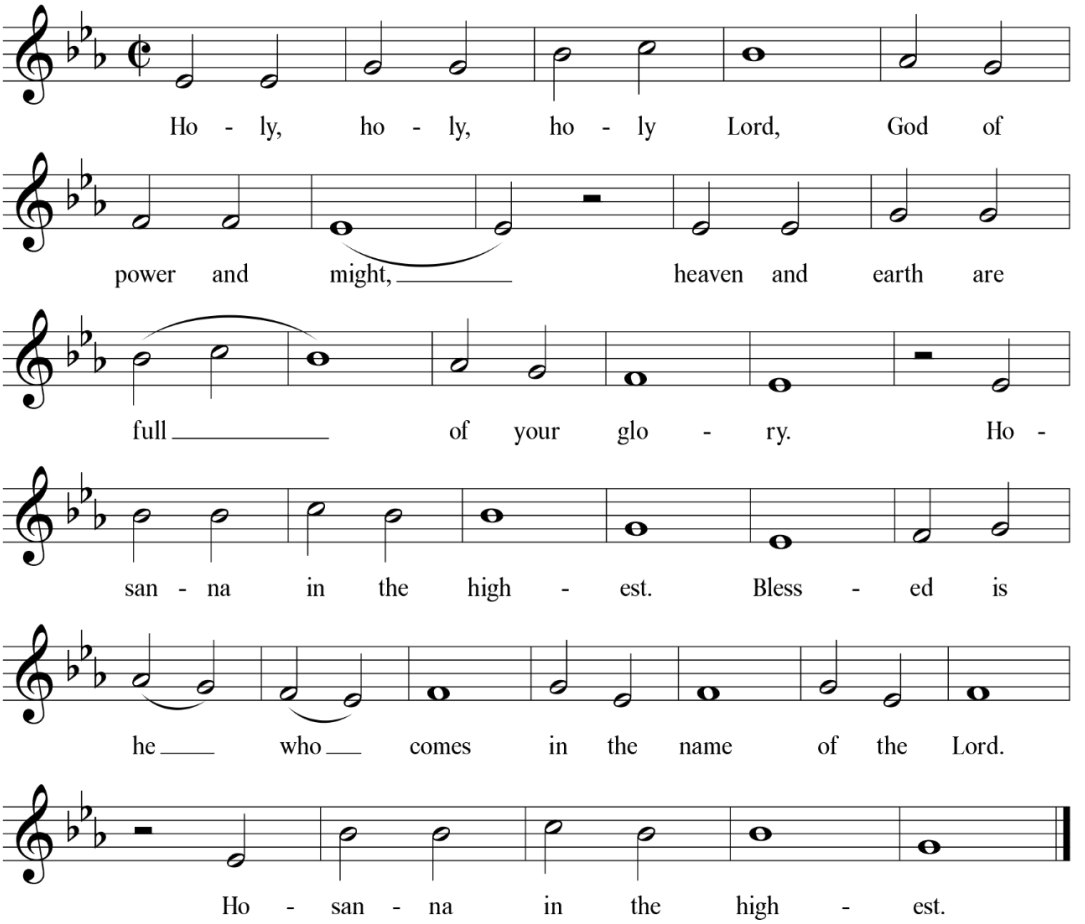
The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

All thanks and praise are yours at all times and in all places, our true and loving God; through Jesus Christ, your eternal Word, the Wisdom from on high by whom you created all things. You laid the foundations of the world and enclosed the sea when it burst out from the womb; You brought forth all creatures of the earth and gave breath to humankind.

Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing, all you create is a sign of hope for our journey; And so as the morning stars sing your praises we join the heavenly beings and all creation as we shout with joy:

SANCTUS

From *St. Stephen Mass* — *Warren Michel Swenson*



From *St. Stephen Mass,* composed for the 150th anniversary of St. Stephen's Church, Millburn, NJ

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all, your Word has never been silent; you called a people to yourself, as a light to the nations, you delivered them from bondage and led them to a land of promise. Of your grace, you gave Jesus to be human, to share our life, to proclaim the coming of your holy reign and give himself for us, a fragrant offering.

Through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, you have freed us from sin, brought us into your life, reconciled us to you, and restored us to the glory you intend for us.

We thank you that on the night before he died for us Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, gave it to his friends and said: "Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper Jesus took the cup of wine, said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said:
"Drink this, all of you: this cup is the new Covenant in my Blood, poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And so, remembering all that was done for us: the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and ascension, longing for Christ's coming in glory, and presenting to you these gifts your earth has formed and human hands have made, we acclaim you, O Christ:

Dying, you destroyed our death. Rising, you restored our life. Christ Jesus, come in glory!

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine that they may be to us the Body and Blood of your Christ. Grant that we, burning with your Spirit's power, may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ, and in the fullness of time gather us with all your people into the joy of our true eternal home.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, we worship you our God and Creator in voices of unending praise.

Blessed are you now and for ever. AMEN.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

Our Father, our Mother, 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 BREAKING OF THE BREAD & THE INVITATION

We break this bread to share in the Body of Christ.
We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread.

Whoever you are, where ever you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome at Christ's table.

All are welcome at God's table to receive Communion or a blessing. Gluten-free hosts are available. Please use the hand sanitizer available in the pew before coming forward.

COMMUNION HYMN

H 712 Dona nobis pacem *Dona nobis pacem*



Please stand as you are able.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of abundance, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of salvation; you have united us in 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 forever in the risen life of Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Sending

We go forth as Christ's body in the world.

Please be seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as you are able.

BLESSING

BOOS 2003 adapted

May almighty God, by whose providence our Saviour Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. **Amen.**

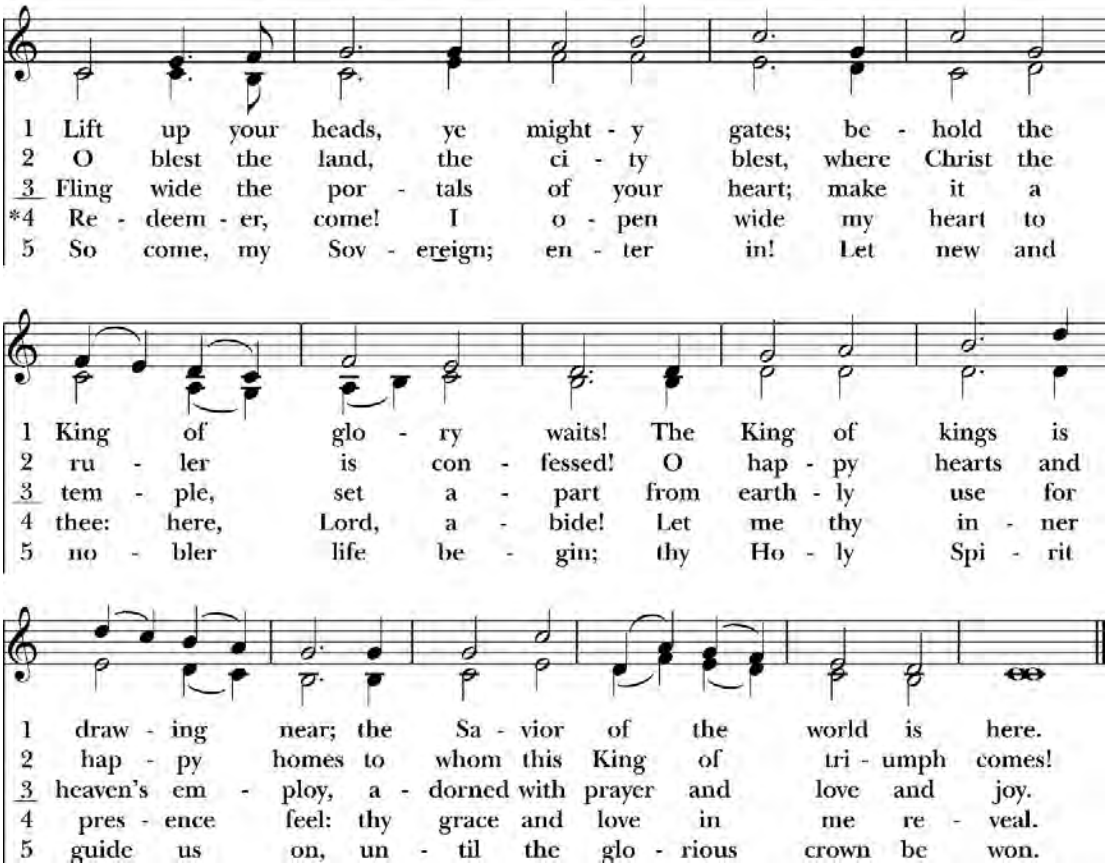
May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. **Amen.**

May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life. **Amen.**

And the blessing of the Almighty Triune God be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

H 436 Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates *Truro*



THE DISMISSAL

Let us go forth rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

LITURGICAL STEWARDSHIP

Officiant:	The Rev. Paula J. Toland
Deacon:	The Rev. Deacon Karen Eberhardt
Minister of Music:	Kim Williams
Organist:	John Schucker
Altar Guild:	Nancy, Julia, Maria N.
Chalicer/Crucifer:	Steve
Reader/Intercessor:	Maryalice
Greeter/Usher:	
Tech Verger:	Ron
Coffee Hour:	Linda

Source for today's lectionary: The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL).
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Our Parish Prayer List

Mary Ruth Stone	James K.	Ambika Bedi	Maryann Ekberg
Kris Hunt	Sue and Larry H.	Timothy M.	Lizzie Ekberg
Aldaiza DaSilva	Maggie Holland	Kyle McManus	Aiden Bogden
Martha Lipowski	Celine Ghiara	Karl Sauer	John McDonnell
Boyd Hunnaman	Carol McManus	Anne M.	

The Diocesan and Anglican Communion Cycles of Prayer

For our sister congregation in the Evelyn Underhill Region, Calvary, Summit

The ministries of the Rev. David Taylor, the Rev. Anne Thatcher, and the Rev. Bill Thiele

In thanksgiving for the ministry of the Rt. Rev. William H. Odenheimer
Became 1st Bishop Diocesan on November 12, 1874, upon the founding of this diocese

The work of the Annual Diocesan Convention
Friday & Saturday, November 13 & 14

Province de L'Eglise Anglicane Du Congo

Upcoming Events

Details can be found in the weekly e-newsletter, which is available on our website.

DATE	TIME	DESCRIPTION
11/8	10:00 AM	Sunday Worship
	11:30 AM	Reading with the Rector
	1:00 PM	AA Meeting
	4:00 PM	Organ Recital
11/9	7:00 PM	Bible Study
	7:30 PM	MA Meeting
11/10	7:00 PM	Practicing our Faith
11/15	10:00 AM	Sunday Worship
	11:30 AM	Vestry Meeting
	1:00 PM	AA Meeting

READING WITH THE RECTOR – We will be discussing The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters in the common room today, November 8th at 11:30 AM.

ALL-BACH ORGAN RECITAL – Eric Plutz, Princeton University Organist, will join us today, November 8th at 4:00 PM for an all-Bach program. General admission at the door. $20 suggested donation. Reception to follow the performance.

ANNUAL TURKEY BOX DRIVE – If you would like to donate a turkey box and bring it to church on Sunday, November 15th to be given to our Drumming Camp families, please e-mail Maryalice Chech at maryalice_chech@yahoo.com. You can also ask a friend if they would like to join you in putting a turkey box together to donate. Many thanks!! -Maryalice

175th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION – We will celebrate St. Stephen's 175th anniversary with a special Sunday service at 3:00 PM on November 22. There will be no 10:00 AM service. The bishop and other guests will join us for this festive occasion. Volunteers are welcome to help with cooking or decorating for the reception—please let Rev. Paula know if you'd like to help.

Legacy Giving Through Your IRA

If you are age 70½ and older, a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) can be a powerful stewardship tool. By directing all or part of your IRA distribution directly to St. Stephen's, you can support the ministries and long-term mission of our parish while potentially receiving favorable tax treatment. For those subject to Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs), a QCD may also help satisfy that requirement. As we look toward future ministry, capital improvements, and endowment growth, planned and charitable giving opportunities such as QCDs can create a lasting impact for generations to come. Please consult your tax and financial advisors to learn more.

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

"A diverse Episcopal parish, a life-giving sanctuary, a place where love begets love. Seekers, doubters, and believers find a comfortable place in our midst."

119 Main Street, Millburn, NJ 07041 / 973-376-0688 / ststephensmillburn.org
Rector: The Rev. Paula J. Toland; Emergency Contact: 508-542-1327
Parish Administrator: Maria T. Card
Children & Youth Minister: Julia Kaluzna

Minister of Music: Kim Williams; Organist: John Schucker

Members of the Vestry
Roger Riedel, Warden, Property & Preschool;
Ashley Morgan: Treasurer; Fran Taber; Julia Dorn; Kira Hanson; Linda Soughan; Steve Moran; Tom Hillemeier; Barbara Riedel: Recording Secretary & Clerk

Sheelagh Clarke: Vestry Emerita

If you wish to receive the weekly e-newsletter, please contact the parish office at 973-376-0688 or church@ststephensmillburn.org.