

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2024



We seek to be instruments of God's peace, bearing witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ for all people.

ST. FRANCIS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Ministers: Every member of the Congregation



Welcome in the name of the living Christ to St. Francis Church! May you find renewed grace and peace as we worship together today. St. Francis is an Episcopal Church, part of the wider ministry of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts. If you are visiting with us today, please help us get to know you by introducing yourself at the door, and also by signing our guest book or filling out a pew card. *Please be sure to include an email address if you wish to be added to our mailing list.*

Please remember to take your cell phone or electronic device off silent mode at the end of worship.

You are invited to enter in reverence and awe of God's presence in this holy place. Before the liturgy begins we commend the keeping of silence as a time for prayer and reflection. The holy season of Advent is a time of watchfulness and a season of preparation. We are eager to celebrate the feast of the Incarnation – Christmas. But as with all “pregnancies” there is first a time for waiting.

All baptized persons – regardless of denomination or age – are invited to receive the sacrament with us. All are welcome to the Table; even if you choose to not receive, you may wish to receive a blessing. Gluten-free bread is provided for those who request it; please let one of the clergy or ushers know of your request.

ABOUT OUR WORSHIP:

The liturgy that we use for worship is from the red Book of Common Prayer (**BCP**). **Bold** print is to be spoken by the people of God.

The hymnals used for our worship service are indicated by their name, and the specific hymn by its associated number. The blue hymnal book located in your pew book rack is the “1982 Hymnal.”

THE ADVENT WREATH: The Advent wreath, as we know it today, was first used in 16th century Germany. The Advent wreath may have some local differences and meanings, but in general, the wreath has four candles around the wreath, and one candle in the center. The candles can be seen with varying colors: sometimes purple (meaning a season of penitence, much like Lent), or they may be a deep blue (meaning a season of hope and waiting). The candle representing the Third Sunday of Advent is often pink, to represent “Joy” and is called “Gaudete Sunday” (from the Latin, “Gaudete in Domino semper” meaning, “Rejoice in the Lord always”). The candle in the center is nearly always white, to represent the purity of Christ.

HOLY EUCHARIST – RITE II

GATHERING HYMN: 10:00 a.m. *O Come, O Come Emmanuel verses 7-8*

Hymnal 56

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: 10:00 a.m. *Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord*

Hymnal 437

THE WORD OF GOD

ACCLAMATION AND COLLECT FOR PURITY

BCP 355

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

And Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

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.**

KYRIE: 8:00 a.m. (*spoken*) Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.** Lord, have mercy.

10:00 a.m. (*sung*)

Hymnal S-96

COLLECT OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

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.**

FIRST READING: *Micah 5:2-5a*

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.

Thanks be to God.

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.

SECOND READING: *Hebrews 10:5-10*

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.

Thanks be to God.

SEQUENCE HYMN: 10:00 a.m.

Praise we the Lord this day

Hymnal 267

GOSPEL: *Luke 1:39-45*

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ

SERMON:

The Rev. Patrick Perkins

THE NICENE CREED

BCP 358

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 – FORM VI

BCP 392

In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

Silence

For all people in their daily life and work;
For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

For this community, the nation and the world;
For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

For the just and proper use of your creation;
For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;
For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;
For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

...for Sean, our Presiding Bishop; Doug, our Bishop; for our own parish of St. Francis, our clergy, staff, wardens and vestry; and for all bishops and other ministers;
For all who serve God in his Church.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation...

...for Joe, our President, and Maura, our Governor.

...for peace throughout the world; for the victims of war and terrorism, for the people of Ukraine and Afghanistan, for peace in Sudan, Yemen, and the region of the Middle East; and for those facing famine and drought in Somalia and the Horn of Africa;

...for the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families, especially J. Pigsley, Gregory Smith, Jason Haynes, Mark Williams, Jacob Pezzini, Tyler Jeck, David Lane, Riley Smith, Andy Kimball, James Cimochoowski;

...for those in need of healing; Rich, Eric Warner, Kathleen Lloyd Jones, Jack, Jonathan Seale, Ann Murphy, John Dougherty, Paul Stanovich, Adam Schmidt, Charles Delisle, Lori, Matteo Padilla, Tom, John, Rocco Notaro, Carole, Joanne, Jane Williams, Elizabeth Heath, Bev, Sheri Dumas, Diane, Donna, Jaelyn Rose, Judy Crosby; those suffering from homelessness and all types of addiction and mental illness; the residents and staff of Holden Nursing Home; and those who mourn; and those we name at this time, either silently or aloud;

Silence

Hear us Lord;

For your mercy is great.

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life;

...for those in our Parish Cycle of Prayer: Emily, Conrad, Nina and Maxwell Lizano; Fred and Cheryl Lonardo; Esteban Loustaunau, Kathleen Suchenski, Diego Suchenski Loustaunau and Luci Suchenski Loustaunau; Rob, Maureen and Katherine Lowell;

...for The Church of the Province of Uganda; for the parish of St. Matthew's, Worcester; for the mission of Dismas House and Dismas Farm;

...for this community of St. Francis, for ourselves and our ministries; for the ministry of unCommon Ground; for the mission of Renewal Works;

Please offer your thanksgivings at this time, either silently or aloud;

Silence

We will exalt you, O God our King;

And praise your Name for ever and ever.

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom;

Silence

Lord, let your loving kindness be upon them;

Who put their trust in you.

We pray to you also for the forgiveness of our sins.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; in your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone; and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

THE PEACE

BCP 360

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE HOLY COMMUNION

OFFERTORY HYMN: 10:00 a.m.

The angel Gabriel from heaven came

Hymnal 265

OFFERTORY PRESENTATION AND DOXOLOGY

8:00 a.m. *All things come of thee, O Lord. **And of Thine own have we given thee.***

10:00 a.m.

Tune: Hymnal 380

***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. Amen.***

BLESSING OF THE PRAYER SHAWLS

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING: *Eucharistic Prayer A*

BCP 361

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

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

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People ***We lift them to the Lord.***

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People ***It is right to give God thanks and praise.***

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and every where to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Here a Proper Preface is sung or said on all Sundays, and on other occasions as appointed.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

SANCTUS

8:00 a.m. (spoken)

10:00 a.m. (sung)

Hymnal S130

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.***

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he 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 shed for you and for many 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.

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BCP 364

**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.**

FRACTION ANTHEM:

8:00 a.m. Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

10:00 a.m. Agnus Dei **Hymnal S-164**

Jesus, Lamb of God: have mercy on us. Jesus, bearer of our sins: have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer, redeemer of the world, give us your peace, give us your peace.

COMMUNION HYMN: 10:00 a.m.

Humbly I adore thee

Hymnal 314

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

BCP 366

Let us pray.

Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

ADVENT BLESSING

RECESSIONAL HYMN: 10:00 a.m.

The King shall come when morning dawns

Hymnal 73

THE DISMISSAL

Go in peace and walk in the way of Love.

Thanks be to God.

SERVERS THIS WEEKEND:

Altar Guild: Roz Glanville, Julie Russell, Carol Perkins, Kari Currie

Nursing Home: Bev Giarusso

8:00 a.m.

Reader: Ginny Powell-Brasier

LEM: Dick Delorme

10:00 a.m.

Usher: Craig Stanovich

Reader: Kathy Dixon

LEMs: Christina Melzar and Tina Chen

Coffee Hour: The Surabian Family

St. Francis Episcopal Church



Bearing Witness
to
Christ's Love

Office Phone: 508-829-3344 Email: parishadmin@stfrancisholden.org
Web Page: www.stfrancisholden.org

Rector: The Rev. Patrick R. Perkins
Minister of Music: Elizabeth Keusch
Parish Administrator: Elena Poirier
Church School: Amy Mellors

rector@stfrancisholden.org
music@stfrancisholden.org
parishadmin@stfrancisholden.org
churchschool@stfrancisholden.org

