



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025, 10:30 A.M.
THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

HOLY EUCHARIST: RITE II

THE PRELUDE

Dancing Day

James Brooks Kuykendall

THE OPENING HYMN 76 *On Jordan's banks the Baptist's cry*

THE OPENING ACCLAMATION (BCP p. 355)

All stand.

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

People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

Celebrant 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.**

TRISAGION

(Organ)

Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and
Might - y, Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, have
mer - cy on us. Ho - ly God,
Ho - ly and Might - y, Ho - ly Im -
mor - tal One, have mer - cy on us.
Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and Might - y,
Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, have mer - cy on us.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant 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.**

THE FIRST LESSON: ISAIAH 7:10-16

A Reading from Isaiah.

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore 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.

He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For 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.**

PSALM 80:1-7; 16-18

Sung by the choir.

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 EPISTLE: ROMANS 1:1-7

A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring

about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name,
including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,
To 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.**

SEQUENCE HYMN 67 *Comfort, comfort ye my people*

THE GOSPEL: MATTHEW 1:18-25

Remain standing.

Priest The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Now 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. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But 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. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

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

Priest The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

THE SERMON

The Rev. Dr. Duncan Johnston

All sit.

THE NICENE CREED (BCP p. 358)

All stand.

The Celebrant and people say together

**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.**

Celebrant In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

We pray today for those who serve in our local hospitals, care facilities, schools, colleges, and correctional facilities; for those who serve in law enforcement and in the legal system; and for members of the military and those serving overseas, especially Ben and Eric.

For all people in their daily life and work,

For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

For our President Donald, our Governor Kay, and our Mayor Steven; for members of our state legislature, and our national representatives and senators, that there may be respectful and wise governance for the welfare of our nation and of the world; and for victims of violence and conflict, especially in Providence, Rhode Island, Australia, Eastern Europe, and in the Middle East. For this community, the nation, and the world;

For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

For an awareness and sense of gratitude for the beauty of the world around us; 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, Glenda and Brian our Bishops, Duncan and Mark our priests, for Stewart our seminarian, and for all bishops and other ministers.

For all who serve God in his Church.

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

Hear us, Lord;

For your mercy is great.

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

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, especially those for whom the altar flowers have been given: _____

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.**

Celebrant

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.**

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The celebrant will say an offertory sentence. The people sit.

THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* John Stainer

All stand to sing the offertory verse when the offertory is brought up to the altar.

**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.**

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

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

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

Celebrant It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, because you sent your 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, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:



All kneel as able.

Celebrant

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, 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, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People

We remember his death,

We proclaim his resurrection,

We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

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 forever, **AMEN.**

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

Celebrant and People

**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

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

People **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

The Celebrant presents the holy gifts to the congregation saying

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

The priest receives the Sacrament, and then serves the people with these words:

The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. **Amen.**

The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. **Amen.**

You are very welcome to receive Holy Communion if you have been baptized in any Christian church. Those who wish not to receive Holy Communion may come to the altar rail, fold their arms across their chests, and receive a blessing from the priest.

Communion is offered in both kinds at the communion rail or station on the floor.

Communicants may receive the wine by intinction or by drinking directly from the cup.

THE AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER (BCP p. 365)

All kneel as able.

Celebrant

Let us pray.

**Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

THE BLESSING

Go now, with your hope in God's mercy
for all God has promised you will be fulfilled.
Trust God's strength for your safety,
walk in the ways of peace,
and be ready to greet the coming Lord.

And may God our Savior look with favor upon you;
May Christ Jesus use his wonderful power for you;
and may the Holy Spirit leap joyously with you
and pour forth from you in songs of praise. Amen.

THE CLOSING HYMN 66 Come, thou long-expected Jesus

All stand.

THE DISMISSAL

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God.**

THE POSTLUDE *People, Look East; Prepare the Royal Highway,* arr. David Cherwein

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TODAY'S SERVERS

Clergy: The Reverend Dr. Duncan Johnston, *Rector*

The Reverend Mark E. Waldo, Jr., *Associate Rector*

Director of Children's Formation: Sarah Collier

Director of Youth Ministries: J.R. Marshall

Organist: Jim Conely

Acolytes: Chloe Cumuze, Maggie Mantooth, Davis Schremser, McKinney Wise

Altar Guild: Melissa Carter, Debbie Schremser

Lector and Intercessor: Scott Mitchell, Nick Prillaman

Eucharistic Ministers: William Haynes, Radney Ramsey

Ushers/Greeters: Keith Miller, Jon Dailey, Mary Martin Mitchell, Ashley Roseboro

Flower Guild: Caroline Lawson, Laura McLemore

Flower Delivery Team: Melissa Carter, Doris Ball, Linda Hutchinson

Videographer: Jim Cannon

Instrumentalists: Sunny Xu, *cello*; Robby Gibson, *guitar*

Altar Flowers are given in memory of: The Rev. James Walter and Katherine Walter

Your prayers are requested for the following parishioners:

Renee Carlisle, Rick Durden, Marla Foster, Dave Funk, Carolyn Fillmore, Emily Crump Johannes, Carma Marks, Richard McCrory, Pat McDonald, Eddie McDowell, Martha Collier Mosely, Cameron Napier, Bud Nason, Elizabeth Potter, Shirley Price, Hawthorne Ramsey, Debbie Steindorff, Barbara Wallace, Florence Young

Prayers are also requested for these friends: Gail Alsobrook, Mac Burton, Willie "Bill" Carden, John Ferguson, Bob Geddie, Roger Holliday, Stephanie Holmes, Josie Lee, Charles Lewis, Leslie Little, Margaret Moore, Karen Pacheco, Pat Patterson, Ron Skoneki, Johnny Smith, Madera Spenser, Chandler Taylor, Connie Thomas, Katherine Weidner, Frank Winkler, Sharon Carney Wright

Please notify us when you are sick or hospitalized so that we might provide pastoral care. The prayer list will be updated monthly, please notify us if names need to remain longer.

Pastoral Care Team for December: Betsy Cannon, Josie Eskridge, Mary-Nelms Parsons, Renee Taylor

Rector's Forum: Welcome Course

Beginning Sunday, January 26, at 9:15 a.m. in the Library, join Duncan for an 8-week Welcome Course. This is an engaging program of presentations and discussions about the Christian faith and Episcopal tradition. Email Duncan@stjohnsmontgomery.org to register.

Bazaar Updates

Bazaar 2025 was a tremendous success! This was possible due to your donations of time, talents, and treasure. Countless hours of cooking, pricing, setting up rooms and so much more for this event were noticed and appreciated. From the bottom of my heart, thank you to each and every one of you!

With all of your hard work and dedication the ECW raised over \$32,000 after expenses for Outreach Programs in our community. This year we will be giving \$19,864.86 to Boys & Girls Club of the River Region to fund two new classrooms for their facilities. We will also be making donations of \$5,000 to the Friendship Mission, \$5,000 to Meals on Wheels, \$2,500 to the Grace Episcopal Church Diaper Ministry and \$2,500 to St. John's Backpack Program. We will also be sharing a little Christmas Spirit by fulfilling an Angel Tree request.

This is all possible because of YOU!! Thank you!! With a grateful heart, Christine

Living Well through Advent

The Living Well through Advent Bible Study group will meet at the home of Marney Garzon Sunday evenings throughout the Advent season at 6 p.m. Booklets are available in the church office or on the St. John's website. For more information, please contact Carrie Shaw at cgshaw2014@gmail.com.

Christmas Eve/Christmas Day Services

There will be three services on Christmas Eve: 5 p.m. (family-friendly service; bring a toy to donate to Mercy House), 7 p.m. (Festal Eucharist), and 10 p.m. (Holy Eucharist Rite 1). On Christmas Day we will meet at 10 a.m. to celebrate Christ's birth with Eucharist and carols.

Volunteers Needed for Christmas Flowers

Today following the 10:30 a.m. service, we are seeking volunteers to assist with simple but important tasks: sorting and hanging greenery, organizing wreaths, watering poinsettias, and more. A light lunch will be provided, and the remaining work will be completed by the Flower Guild.

If you have a knack for tying bows, we also need help creating over 30 outdoor wreath bows. Ribbon has been purchased, but as costs for greenery, wreaths, and ribbon continue to rise, you may also choose to support this ministry with a little extra added to your Christmas decoration donation.

If you can help in any way, please text Sarah Spratling at 334-220-1942. Your time, talent, and generosity help make our church a beautiful and sacred space for all this Christmas season.

STAY CONNECTED TO ST. JOHN'S

Breeze System Gives Access to Directory, Calendar, & Giving

St. John's has recently implemented a new system called Breeze for its giving, directory, calendar, website, and app. Parishioners received an invite via email to create an account. Information guides are printed and available in the church office or on the St. John's website. Please call the church office or email emily@stjohnsmontgomery.org for assistance. *Please note: Breeze is recommended for parishioners, but not required. Printed directories and giving statements are available upon request.*

St. John's e-Newsletter

The St. John's e-newsletter goes out every Tuesday at 6 p.m.

If you are not receiving the newsletter and would like to, please email emily@stjohnsmontgomery.org to get added to the mailing list.

If you are not receiving emails from the church office, please scan email churchoffice@stjohnsmontgomery.org or call 334-262-1937.



We're glad you are at St. John's today.

Whether you are visiting for the first time or attending regularly,
you are a part of the St. John's family.

Visitor Card



Visitors, please use this QR code to provide us with some information about you and your family so that we can better serve you.

Visit our website to see service times, news from
the parish, upcoming events,
mission opportunities and more.

stjohnsmontgomery.org



Online Giving



If you wish to make a gift to St. John's,
our online giving portal makes it easier than ever.

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