



welcome

**EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION**

Third Sunday of Advent, Year A

Holy Eucharist Rite II

10 am

December 14, 2025

405 Talbot Hall Road  
Norfolk, Virginia 23505  
(757) 423-6715

## ORDER OF SERVICE

Prelude

Processional Hymn

“The Angel Gabriel”

*Blue Hymnal 265*

Opening Acclamation

*Book of Common Prayer p. 299*

Gloria

*Blue Hymnal S-280*

Collect and Lessons

*Book of Common Prayer p. 357*

### **The Collect**

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

### **The First Lesson**

**Isaiah 35:1-10**

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it 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.

Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.

Say 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."

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

A 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.  
No 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.  
And 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.

The Word of the Lord

*Thanks be to God.*

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 Epistle**

**James 5:7-10**

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

The Word of the Lord

*Thanks be to God.*

Sequence Hymn

“Prepare the Way, O Zion”

*Blue Hymnal 65*

## **The Gospel**

**Matthew 11:2-11**

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

*Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

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

As 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? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.’

“Truly 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord *Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

Sermon *The Rev. Stewart Tabb*

Nicene Creed *Book of Common Prayer p. 358*

Prayers of the People *Book of Common Prayer p. 387*

Confession of Sin & Absolution *Book of Common Prayer p. 360*

The Peace *Book of Common Prayer p. 360*

### ***Holy Communion***

Offertory Sentence

Offertory

“Blest Are the Pure In Heart” *Blue Hymnal 656*

Eucharistic Prayer B *Book of Common Prayer p. 367*

Sanctus *Blue Hymnal S-125*

The Lord’s Prayer *Book of Common Prayer p. 364*

Breaking of the Bread *Book of Common Prayer p. 364*

Communion Hymn

“Now My Tongue, the Mystery Telling” vs. 1,2,4,5 *Blue Hymnal 329*

Post Eucharistic Prayer *Book of Common Prayer p. 366*

Recessional Hymn

“Creator of the Stars of Night” vs. 1-4 *Blue Hymnal 60*

Dismissal *Book of Common Prayer p. 366*

# *In Our Prayers*

Alexander Beamon, Joe Beck, Susan Beers, Gloria Carter, Billy Clark, Linda Day, Elaine Evans, Diane Forrest, Kate Hien, Kris Huddle, Katie Hughes, Rick Jones, Donna Killmon, Bryan Knight, Shana Paul, Sydney Rudolph, Diane Shephard, Doug Thompson, Sally Todd, Nancy Whitman, and Margaret Wynn.

We pray for Sean our Presiding Bishop, Susan our Bishop, Stewart our Rector, and Genevieve our Deacon.

We pray for the people of Ascension, that formed by our Baptismal promises we might embody God's community of Shalom in the world.

We pray for the Vestry and people of Ascension, and for Stewart that the Holy Spirit continues to guide us all as we prepare for her retirement and the changes it will bring.

We give thanks for the blessings of this life.

We give thanks for the birthday of Pam Knight (12/17).

We give thanks for the anniversary of Merrill & Dee Dorman (12/19).

We give thanks for our lawn teams.

# Announcements

**We are grateful for Karla Stead** for playing the piano for us today. Thank you, Karla!

**ROMEOs & JULIETs** The ROMEOs and JULIETs will join together for festive fun and fellowship on Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at the Olive Garden at Janaf Shopping Center. They'll meet for lunch at 11:30 a.m. Please RSVP to either Bill Willey or Donna Killmon.

**Greening the Church:** Hello Friends! We need poinsettias to Green the Church on December 21st. Please bring in donated poinsettias by Friday, December 19th in 6inch pots with green foil. Thank you!

**Reimbursements:** If anyone has any invoices that they need reimbursed from the Church, please get them into the finance office by December 17th. We need to process them before the financial closing of 2025. Thank you!

**Advent Devotionals Now Available** Our Advent devotionals are now available in the Narthex. Please feel free to pick one up on your way in or out of worship.

**Stewardship Pledge Cards** A big thank you to everyone who has already turned in their pledge cards! If you haven't had a chance to submit yours already, please do so as soon as possible. Thank you!

**Advent Adult Formation Series** We are delighted to offer the wonderful JustFaith Advent Series, *"Through the Wilderness: Healing for a Weary World,"* during the four Sundays of Advent as part of our Adult Formation program.



Please note that we will begin each session at 8:45 a.m., as the material will take most of an hour. We hope you will join us for this meaningful time of reflection, healing, and preparation during the Advent season.

**Stuff!** As part of her upcoming retirement, Stewart is cleaning out her office and would like to find new homes for various items, including books, icons, crosses, and rosaries. Please feel free to stop by her office when Stewart is there to see if there's anything you'd like to have.

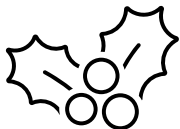
**Facebook Livestream:** Please remember that services are livestreamed to Facebook each week for those who are unable to attend. If you prefer not to appear on the livestream, please choose a seat towards the back of the church. We move the cameras during Communion to avoid filming. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

## **Outreach, Collections, & Opportunities**

**Catholic Worker** Coffee and white socks are always needed. At this time of the year sleeping bags are needed, new or used.

**Reminder** The deadline for announcements is Tuesday at 5pm. Announcements received after that time may not make it into the bulletin or the emailed announcements.

# Celebrations for Christmas



Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 9pm

**Christmas Eve Festival Service**

Thursday, December 25<sup>th</sup> at 10am

**Christmas Day Service**

Sunday, December 28<sup>th</sup> at 10am

**Festival of Lessons and Carols (No Eucharist)**

Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup> at 10am

**Festival of the Epiphany**

## Weekly Studies:

**Tuesday Centering Prayer** meets at 7:45am on Tuesdays on Zoom for one hour. The meeting opens at 7:30 for chatting, then at 7:45 we proceed with the reading of a psalm, 20 minutes of silent prayer/meditation followed by a discussion of the reading. The group is currently reading *The Great Search: Turning to Earth and Soul in the Quest for Healing and Home* by John Philip Newell. We are a diverse group with members joining from three countries and various religious backgrounds. You are invited to join us at any time. To get on the Zoom invite list, please contact Anji Harris (anjiharris54@gmail.com) or Sally Miller (757-489-5293 or [samiller903@yahoo.com](mailto:samiller903@yahoo.com)).

**Re-Imagining Church** now meets on **Thursdays at 12pm**. The meeting serves as a time of spiritual reflection and planning as we listen for and try to follow God's call to Ascension. Please join us; your perspective may be how God is informing us what we should be doing next.

### Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88559209322?pwd=BubDI0FA8IXIwwryikkt4Jito7gq0r.1>

**Meeting ID:** 885 5920 9322 **Passcode:** 346720

**Thursday Mid-Morning Seekers' Bible Study** will watch a video, read scripture passages, and discuss the questions together. I recommend joining the meeting early in case you have any issues getting connected. I hope to see everyone on Thursday at 10:00 am! If you are not on the email group or have trouble accessing the Zoom, please contact Susan Meredith at [merbec@cox.net](mailto:merbec@cox.net) or 757-617-1959.

**Meeting ID:** 810 7002 6611 **Passcode:** Bible

## **A Look at the Week Ahead:**

### **Monday**

11:30 am ROMEOs & JULIETs Lunch – Olive Garden (Janaf)

### **Tuesday**

7:30 am Centering Prayer – Zoom

10:00 am Food Pantry - Pantry

11:30 am Building & Grounds – Rose Hall

7:00 pm Vestry Meeting – Conference Room

### **Thursday**

10:00 am Food Pantry – Pantry

10:00 am Mid-Morning Seeker's Bible Study – Zoom

12:00 pm Re-Imagining Church - Zoom

### **Sunday**

8:45 am Godly Play – Parish Hall

8:45 am Coffee & Adult Formation – Hall for Coffee Then Lounge

10:00 am Fourth Sunday of Advent - Holy Eucharist – Sanctuary

Greening of the Church (Immediately following the Service)

Lunch & Celebration of the Retirement of +Stewart Tabb

## OUR VISION IS

Honoring the Past  
Looking Forward in Hope  
Be the Face of Healing  
Healing is the Core Value

### Your Vestry is here to serve you!

Susan Meredith*	2024-2026	<a href="mailto:merbec@cox.net">merbec@cox.net</a>	757.617.1959
Anji Harris+	2023-2026	<a href="mailto:Anjiharris54@gmail.com">Anjiharris54@gmail.com</a>	757.831.3474
Pat Duncan	2023-2026	<a href="mailto:Patlduncan2020@gmail.com">Patlduncan2020@gmail.com</a>	478.777.0904
Karen Newbern^	2024-2027	<a href="mailto:newby0325@gmail.com">newby0325@gmail.com</a>	757.685.6935
Luke Suber	2024-2027	<a href="mailto:lukesuber@yahoo.com">lukesuber@yahoo.com</a>	361.779.7216
Carol Evans	2024-2027	<a href="mailto:cevans1017@gmail.com">cevans1017@gmail.com</a>	757.335.1774
Robin Kruger	2025-2028	<a href="mailto:Rekruger54@gmail.com">Rekruger54@gmail.com</a>	757.470.9882

\*Senior Warden    +Junior Warden    ^Register

### Clergy

**Bishop** The Right Reverend Susan Haynes

**Rector** The Reverend Stewart Tabb

**Deacon** The Reverend Genevieve Nelson

**Guest Pianist** Karla Stead

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