

St. Thomas Episcopal Church The Order of Worship for Epiphany 4 February 2, 2025 † 8:30 AM

Window: The Baptism of Jesus

Today is the Feast of the Presentation, when Mary and Joseph presented Jesus at the Temple and Simeon declared him "a light to enlighten all the nations." The custom of blessing candles on this day comes from Simeon's song of praise, the Nunc Dimittis (Latin for "now let you depart"). In the quiet before the service begins, we invite you to place candles from home in the windows around the chapel to be blessed at the offertory.

THE ENTRANCE

Welcome

Please stand as comfortable at the ringing of the bell.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST: RITE II THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Celebrant Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.

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

Collect for Purity unison

BCP 355

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.

Song of Praise: The Third Song of Isaiah

BCP 87

Arise, shine, for your light has come, * and the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you.

For behold, darkness covers the land; * deep gloom enshrouds the peoples.

But over you the Lord will rise, *

and his glory will appear upon you.

Nations will stream to your light, *

and kings to the brightness of your dawning.

Your gates will always be open; *

by day or night they will never be shut.

They will call you, The City of the Lord, *

The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Violence will no more be heard in your land, *
ruin or destruction within your borders.
You will call your walls, Salvation, *
and all your portals, Praise.
The sun will no more be your light by day; *
by night you will not need the brightness of the moon.
The Lord will be your everlasting light, *
and your God will be your glory.

The Collect of the Day

BCP 215

Almighty and everliving God, we humbly pray that, as your only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple, so we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts by Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lessons

Please be seated for the reading of the scriptures.

A Reading from the Prophet Malachi

Malachi 3:1-4

Thus says the Lord, See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight-- indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 84 BCP 707

- 1 How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts! *
 My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord;
 my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
- The sparrow has found her a house and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; *
 by the side of your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.
- 3 Happy are they who dwell in your house! * they will always be praising you.

- 4 Happy are the people whose strength is in you! * whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.
- 5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs, * for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.
- 6 They will climb from height to height, * and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.
- 7 Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; * hearken, O God of Jacob.
- Behold our defender, O God; * 8 and look upon the face of your anointed.
- For one day in your courts is better than a thousand in my own room, * 9 and to stand at the threshold of the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of the wicked.
- 10 For the Lord God is both sun and shield; * he will give grace and glory;
- No good thing will the Lord wit hold * 11 from those who walk with integrity.
- 12 O Lord of hosts, * happy are they who put their trust in you!

A Reading from Hebrews

Hebrews 2:14-18

Since God's children share flesh and blood, Jesus himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel standing as comfortable

Luke 2:22-40

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

Glory to you, Lord Christ. People

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, the parents of Jesus brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed-- and a sword will pierce your own soul too." There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon

The Nicene Creed unison

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 kneeling or seated

Let us worship the Savior with joy as we offer our prayers, saying hear our prayer.

At the birth of Jesus, Magi traveled from distant lands. We pray for the welfare of the world, for peace in places of conflict, and for the renewal of the Earth.

God of glory, hear our prayer.

At his baptism, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. We pray for the Church, anointed with that same Spirit, that we may practice repentance, proclaim the gospel, and walk in love.

God of glory, hear our prayer.

After his baptism, Jesus gathered a community of disciples. We pray for the health, safety, and wellbeing of this community as we navigate the challenges before us.

God of glory, hear our prayer.

In his preaching, Jesus declared that the Kingdom of God has come near. We pray for our Nation and for our leaders, that we may end division, enact justice, and respect the dignity of every human being.

God of glory, hear our prayer.

In his ministry, Jesus healed the sick and comforted the distressed. We pray for all who are sick, anxious, or troubled, especially St. Thomas parishioners the Pauli family, the Lewis family, Carlene, Marie, Charlene & Randy, Frank, Kristie, Roger, Arthur, Bernie, Elissa, Charlotte, and Cindy, our homebound members John, Ramón & Maria, Carol, and William, and friends of the parish Mr. Shivley, David, Fleur, Lynne, Linda, Gaynor, and Jimmy and for all who care for them.

God of glory, hear our prayer.

Jesus comforted those who grieved and raised the dead to life. We pray for all who grieve and for those who have died, especially Murray, Judy, John, Rick, and Bill.

God of glory, hear our prayer.

The disciples rejoiced to see Jesus transfigured before them. We rejoice in the many blessings of this life, especially your presence with us.

God of glory, hear our prayer.

Receive our prayers, and help us shine with the light of Christ through the power of the Spirit, now and forever. **Amen**.

Confession and Absolution

BCP 360

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Blessing of Candles

Celebrant Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Dear people of God, forty days ago we celebrated the joyful feast of the Incarnation of Jesus. Today we recall the day on which he was presented in the temple, fulfilling the law of Moses. Led by the Spirit, Simeon and Anna came to the temple, recognized the child as the Christ, and proclaimed him with joy. United by the same Spirit, we gather in this house of God, where we shall recognize Christ in the breaking of bread.

Let us pray.

O eternal God, who has created all things; on this day you fulfilled the petitions of the just Simeon: We humbly ask you to bless and sanctify these candles for our use. Graciously hear our prayers and be merciful to us, whom you have redeemed by your Son, who is the light of the world, and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen**

The Offering

St. Thomas is grateful for your gifts.

You may mail a check to 2100 Hilton Avenue, Columbus, GA 31906, donate online at our website (https://www.stthomascolumbus.org/give/), or use your mobile device by texting **STTCOLUMBUS** to **73256**.

The Great Thanksgiving Eucharistic Prayer B, standing as comfortable

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 our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

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: *Celebrant and People*

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.

Remain standing as comfortable, or kneel.

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 Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. For in these last days you sent Jesus to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In Christ, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you.

In Christ, 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 Savior 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 Jesus 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,

We remember Christ's death

We proclaim Christ's resurrection

We await Christ's coming in glory;

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Savior 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 in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, through whom we are acceptable to you, 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, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your children; through Jesus Christ our Savior, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever. **AMEN**.

The Lord's Prayer unison

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.

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant We break this bread to share in the Body of Christ,

People We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread.

All Christians are joyfully invited to share in communion. You do not have to be a member of St. Thomas or an Episcopalian in order to receive. Come forward down the center aisle when invited by the ushers. Go to the farthest end of the altar rail and stand or kneel. Hold out one hand to receive the bread and then dip the bread in the cup or drink from the cup. If you prefer not to share a common cup, hold out two hands to receive the bread and wine together. If you prefer not to receive either the bread or the cup, cross your arms across your chest. If you need a gluten-free wafer, let the server know. If you prefer to receive communion at your pew, let the usher know.

Postcommunion Prayer unison

BCP 365

Sit or kneel as comfortable, keeping aware that some may be kneeling behind you.

Eternal God, you have graciously accepted us as living members of 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 Savior. Amen.

The Blessing

Holy eternal Majesty, Holy incarnate Word, Holy abiding Spirit, Bless you for evermore. Amen.

Dismissal

Celebrant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

In our prayers

St. Thomas parishioners: The Pauli family, the Lewis family, Carlene Pawlowicz, Marie Massey, Charlene & Randy Moore, Frank Feagle, Kristie Ridgeway, Roger Redden, Arthur Frost, Bernie Sutter, Elissa Wagner, Charlotte Mills, Cindy Godwin

Homebound members: John Studstill, Ramón & Maria Capo, Carol Kennon, William South

Friends of the parish: Mr. Shivley (Kelly McFalls) David Johnson (Ann Johnston) Fleur Sterns, Lynne Funck (Reb Kreyling), Linda Wilson (Florence Wakoko), Gaynor (Jenny Holder), Jimmy Hatfield (Amy Hatfield)

Those with continuing concerns: Gene Wells, Frank & Pam Feagle, Ralph Wimberly, Jessica McComb, April Jacobs, Jana Speer, Debbie & Max Anderson, Korie MacDougall, Nicole Ceccato, Neal Fenter, Ellen Free, Steve Scott, Bernie Sutter, Raymond Campbell, Art France, Angela Tulloh

Soldiers & families at Ft. Moore and St. Thomas members & friends who are deployed: Dan Wilcox, Krk Malit

Those celebrating birthdays: Jai-Lyn Chapman 2/2, Patty Cariel 2/3, Susan Sealy 2/3, Anne Huie-Strong 2/4, Rose Wilcox 2/4, Deanna Grube 2/5, Roxanne Gwyn 2/5, Greg Herring 2/5, Alice Barlow 2/6, Chad Cariel 2/6, Addison Harrison 2/6, Beth Thrift 2/7, Hagulwa Sudayi 2/8

Those who have died: Murray Craig 4/4/24, Judy Gunter 4/6/24, John Partin 11/22/24, Rick McKnight 7/30/24, Bill Pauli 1/28/25

Announcements

For more information about the ministries of St. Thomas, pick up our latest *Seasons* newsletter or visit our website at www.StThomasColumbus.org.

Sundays

Coffee Time: 8:45-10:15. Homemade and packaged snacks are available in the parish hall.

Formation for all ages: 9:30-10:15am

Children PreK - 4th grade meet in the Children's Center

Tween and Teens meet in the Youth Room.

Adults: TheoEd Talks and Welcome Classes

TheoEd Talks in the Library, similar to TEDtalks, TheoEd Talks invite faith leaders to share the talk of their lives.

February 2 - Scott Mitchell: Fringe Dwellings

February 9 - Rev. Reginald Wayne Sharpe, Jr.

February 16 - Cole Arthur Riley: The Silence of God

February 23 - Bishop Wright will lead a forum and discussion at 9:30 in the parish hall.

St. Thomas Welcome Classes in All Saints Hall

February 2 - Welcome to Worship II: An overview of our Sunday service.

February 9 - Welcome to the Episcopal Church: A quick trip through 500 years of church

history that explains much of why we believe and act the way we do today

February 16 - Welcome to Ministry and Life Together: How to get involved in learning and service

Wednesdays

Winter Schedule

5:30 to 6 - Eucharist in the Chapel

5:30 to 6:15 - Dinner served on the buffet.

6:00 - Playground open for children who have finished dinner.

6:30 to 7:30 - Formation time for everyone. Children in the Children's Center. Youth in the Youth Room or outside. Adults in the library, plus other spaces when Journey Groups begin.

6:30 to 8:15 - Choir rehearsal in the Nave

Wednesday Night Menus - Pasta Bar this week!

Wednesday Dinner is served buffet style. Donations are welcome but not required. To help offset costs, you may donate cash or with a credit card on site or pay ahead of time on the website. Reservations are helpful to help us plan, but feel free to show up whenever you are available. All menus will have gluten free and vegan options. Let us know you're coming at StThomasColumbus.org/wednesday-dinner/

Journey Groups Resume for Adults on February 5. Scan the QR code to sign up or contact the church office. Details below.

News for this Week

Children, Youth and Adult Formation Discussions

Join us after 10:30 worship for these discussions about Youth Ministry, Children and Family Ministry, and Adult Formation at St. Thomas. Lunch and nursery care provided for each meeting. We anticipate the discussions lasting until 1 pm.

Youth - February 2 - pizza lunch and childcare provided

Children - February 9 - pizza lunch and childcare provided

Adults - February 16 - chicken salad lunch and childcare provided

Scan the QR code to let us know you're coming or contact the church office.

Caring for Caregivers at the Pastoral Institute

Tuesdays starting February 4 from noon - 12:50 Noon - 12:50 PM

Are you providing long-term care to a parent, spouse, child or other loved one? Caring for family with special medical, mental, or physical needs can be a meaningful yet overwhelming experience that often takes a heavy toll on a caregiver's own wellbeing. In this series, the PI 's senior Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist Tom Waynick will facilitate open discussion about the many challenges caregivers face in a safe space that encourages participants to share and connect. Register with the QR code or contact the Pastoral Institute for more information.

Journey Groups Resuming February 5

Strength for the Journey: A Guide to Spiritual Practice by Renee Miller AND Manna & Mercy

Strength for the Journey explores twenty spiritual disciplines that can be part of our daily lives. Meditative practices like prayer. Ministry practices like hospitality. Media practices like music. Mind practices like writing. Movement practices like spending time in nature. Groups will explore how spiritual practices shape us, examine different types of practices, and consider how to incorporate spiritual practices into our lives. A few used copies of the book will be available in the church office for \$7, or you may purchase a copy online. You may also participate in a group without reading the book. Groups will explore Strength for the Journey on Sunday afternoons, Tuesday afternoons, and Wednesday evenings. The Sunday afternoon group will have a Zoom option as well.

In addition, the **Manna & Mercy** Journey Group will continue to meet on Wednesday nights to discuss the second half of the book, focused on the ministry of Jesus and the early church. Look for a link to sign up in Monday's News & Events e-news or contact the church office.

Saints and Sinners February 6, 11:30 am

Gather with friends for a brief mid-day Eucharist and potluck lunch. No reservations required - just show up for a lovely time together. Bring a dish to share! Everyone is welcome to join! This is a great way to meet folks at St. Thomas.

Evensong and Dedication of the Rick McKnight Organ Console and Chambers

Sunday, February 16 at 4 pm

Our dear friend Rick McKnight designed the updates to the St. Thomas Organ and played a major role in the entire Making Room for All project. It is fitting to dedicate the new digital organ chambers and remodeled console in his memory. Join us for an Evensong led by the St. Thomas Choir featuring music by several special guests and a piece for organ and trumpet commissioned for the occasion. A FabArts artist will offer an art activity for children during the service. Nursery care provided. Reception to follow. Please bring finger foods for the reception.

The Dedication of the Remodeled Nave With Confirmation and Reception into the Episcopal Church Sunday, February 23 at 10:30 am

Bishop Wright will be present this morning to dedicate to God the work we have done. He will speak with the congregation in All Saints Hall at 9:30 and then celebrate the 10:30 service with us. Confirmation and Reception into the Episcopal Church will be part of this service. St. Thomas Welcome Classes serve as preparation of adults for confirmation. Several youth have also chosen to be confirmed. This will be a glorious day!

Women's Lectionary Bible Study Thursdays, 10 to 11 am

All women are invited to join Rev. Cindy Cox Garrard in the library or by Zoom from 10 to 11 am on Thursdays to study the lectionary readings for the coming week. A handout for the week's study is emailed to each participant. Contact the church office to be added to the mailing list.

Micah: Words of Judgment, Words of Hope Jewish and Christian Understandings

6 pm, Wednesdays at St. Matthew Lutheran Church

Rabbi Beth Schwartz and The Rev. Taylor W Burton Edwards lead this informative study together. Hosted by St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church in Luther Hall (4026 Macon Road). For more Information contact the church office for contact info for Rabbi Beth or Rev. Taylor. February 5: Micah 6, February 12: Micah 4-5, February 19: Micah 7

QR Code for signups! Use the QR code to find a list of current signups at St. Thomas. New to QR codes? Open the camera on your smartphone (or a QR reader), point at the black and white code box, when prompted push the link that shows up on your screen.

Vestry Members

David Brandenburgh (Sr. Warden), Garrett Vance, Brian Walker, Norm Easterbrook, Jessica Ezzell, Sue O'Dell Andrew Meeks, Mollie Smith, Katie Underwood

St. Thomas Staff

Administrative Assistant: Karen Corthell; Director of Children and Family Ministries: Shayla Holloway; Director of Music: Debbie Anderson; Director of Parish Administration: Patty Slembarski; Director of Parish & Community Engagement: Meg Olive-Allison; Director of Youth & Young Adults: Taylor Mack; Organist: Robin Ericksen; Kitchen Manager & Sexton: Seth Burgamy; Livestream Technician: Nick Williams; Maintenance & Cleaning: Frances Woolfolk; Nursery: Riley Mullen, Evie Smith, Dorothy Uwanawich, Jenneken Varnum; Sexton Assistant: Morgan Camp

St. Thomas Clergy

Rector: Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards; Associate Rector for Mission: Rev. Darius Sudayi