



St Stephen with St John Westminster

www.sswsj.org

Weekly Notes

8th December 2024
(The Second Sunday of Advent)

The Week Ahead

Today	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	10.00am	Parish Eucharist
	6.00pm	Evensong
Morning & Evening Prayer are said in the Tennant Chapel Monday to Friday, 9.15am & 6.00pm		
Monday	12.45pm	Evergreen Club (Zumba by Open Age)
	3.00pm	Tea@3
	5.00pm	Eucharist
Tuesday	10.00am	St Stephen's Stitchers/Creative Clay
	5.00pm	Silence
Wednesday	10.15am	Baby and Toddler Coffee Morning
	12.30pm	Holy Communion (BCP)
	7.00pm	Zumba

Notices

Jospeh Ayeni will be performing two recitations of scripture (King James) from memory. Please join us in church or on Facebook live on Tuesday 10 December at 1pm for a recitation of The Letter of James and on Tuesday 21 January at 6pm for a recitation of The Gospel of John.

Ordinands from St Augustine's College of Theology are undertaking a mission project with us at St Stephen's. Their 'Lost Sheep' project looks to reach the parish in a playful, light touch way, placing Christmas baubles on doorsteps, in the street and in shops, with an invitation for parishioners to return with them to our Carol Service. You are welcome to be part of the experiment by 'dropping' a bauble locally and seeing if, and how, it comes back. The group will briefly share the idea in church in the coming weeks.

Christmas Services

Sunday 15th December
6pm St Stephen's Carol Service

Tuesday 24th December - Christmas Eve Services
5pm Children's Crib Service
11pm Midnight Mass

Wednesday 25th December - Christmas Day Service
10am Festive Family Eucharist

Thursday 26th December - St Stephen's Day Service
10am St Stephen's Eucharist

St Stephen's Rochester Row

Facebook: St Stephen's Westminster | Website: www.sswsj.org | Instagram: Ststephensrochesterrow



To support St Stephen's, please scan QR code above



Introit: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (from op. 135) - Max Reger

Opening Prayer

In the middle of the night, when stark night was darkest, then you chose to come. God's resplendent first-born sent to make us one.

The voices of doom protest: "All these words about justice, love and peace — all these naïve words will buckle beneath the weight of a reality which is brutal and bitter, ever more bitter."

It is true, Lord, it is midnight upon the earth, moonless night and starved of stars. But can we forget that You, the son of God, chose to be born precisely at midnight?

Dom Helder Camara

Let us pray.

God of Mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent Season for ourselves and our families who live with painful experiences of loss. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of Christ who entered the world at Christmas to share our life in sorrow and joy, death and new birth, despair and promise.

Amen.

Opening Hymn: Hills of the North Rejoice - NEH 7

Psalm: 75

First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4

Second Reading: Luke 1:1-25

Reflection

*Why is the baby crying
On this, his special day,
When we have brought him lovely gifts
And laid them on the hay?*

He's crying for the people
Who greet this day with dread
Because somebody dear to them
Is far away or dead.

For all the men and women
Whose love affairs went wrong,
Who try their best at merriment
When Christmas comes along.

For separated parents
Whose turn it is to grieve
While children hang their stockings up
Elsewhere on Christmas Eve.

For everyone whose burden
Carried through the year,
Is heavier at Christmas-time,
The season of good cheer.

That's why the baby's crying
There in the cattle stall:
He's crying for those people.
He's crying for them all.

Wendy Cope

Reproduced by permission of Faber & Faber from *Christmas Poems* by Wendy Cope

Music after the Sermon: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland BWV 599 - J S Bach

Prayers

First Candle

We light this candle to remember those persons who have been loved and lost.
We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices.

We pray for those who have died recently, among them...
And for those whose anniversaries of death fall around this time, among them...

We give thanks for the memory that binds them to us this season that anticipates Christ.

All *May God's eternal love surround them.*

Second Candle

We light this second candle to redeem the pain and loss – the loss of relationships, the loss of health, the loss of jobs, and the loss of financial security. As we gather up the pain of the past, we offer it to you, O God, asking that into our welcome hearts and open hands, you place the gift of peace.

All *Refresh, restore, renew us, Oh God, and lead us into your future.*

Third Candle

We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months and for some of us, years of difficult times. We remember the poignancy of memories, the grief, the sadness, the hurts, and the pain of reflecting on our own mortality.

All *Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.*

Fourth Candle

This fourth candle is lit to remember our faith and the gift of hope that God offers to us in the Christmas story. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

All *Let us remember the one who shows the way and who goes with us into our tomorrows.*

All are invited to come and light a candle for their own prayers this season.

Final Hymn: *Of the Father's Heart Begotten - NEH 33*

Organ Voluntary: *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland BWV 659 - J S Bach*