



St Stephen with St John

Westminster

www.sswsj.org

Evensong

10th December 2023

(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 5.30pm Eucharist
Monday	3.00pm Tea@3 5.30pm Eucharist
Tuesday	10.00am St Stephen's Stitches 5.00pm Silent Hour
Wednesday	10.00am Baby and Toddler Coffee Morning 12.30pm Holy Communion (BCP) 7.00pm Zumba

Notices

Next Sunday at 6pm is our Carol Service. We do hope you will join us.

We are delighted to host Anne Grebby's installation, which has been on tour to Canterbury and Chichester Cathedrals and more recently at St Giles's, Cripplegate. More information about the art and artist are available on our website.

Our Christmas leaflet is now available! Please do take one for yourselves and possibly a few to your neighbours who may like to join one of our wonderful Christmas services. The whole run down of Advent services including special Evensong services are available on [our website](#).

Dates for your Diary

- 17th December 6pm Carol Service
- 24th December – Christmas Eve
 - 10am Eucharist with Baptism
 - 5pm Crib Service with Nativity, followed by Evening Prayers
 - 11pm Midnight Mass
- 25th December 10am Christmas Day Festive Eucharist
- 26th December 10am St Stephen's Day Eucharist
- 11th January 6.30 - Community Screening for Ken Loach's final film: "The Old Oak" - look out for further details over Christmas!



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 40

First Reading: 1 Kings 22.1-28

Second Reading: 2 Peter 3.8-15a

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 Christmastime,
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

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Prayers

O Emmanuel

Cecilia McDowall

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 (v 1-3)

NEH 33

Weihnachten op. 145 no. 3

Max Reger

Fitting our reflection on people's more troubled times and circumstances in this service, Reger's Christmas evocation proceeds darkly and broodingly, and builds to a turbulent climax, but then recedes into the quiet prayerful hope of the Nativity with a setting of the lilting melody of "Silent Night, Holy Night".

