

# The Third Sunday of Advent

## Celebration of Holy Baptism with Eucharist

December 14, 2025

10:00 a.m.



We seek to be instruments of God's peace, bearing witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ for all people.

# ST. FRANCIS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Ministers: Every member of the Congregation



**Welcome** in the name of the living Christ to St. Francis Church! May you find renewed grace and peace as we worship together today. St. Francis is an Episcopal Church, part of the wider ministry of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts. If you are visiting with us today, please help us get to know you by introducing yourself at the door, and also by signing our guest book or filling out a pew card. *Please be sure to include an email address if you wish to be added to our mailing list.*

Please remember to take your cell phone or electronic device off silent mode at the end of worship.

You are invited to enter in reverence and awe of God's presence in this holy place. Before the liturgy begins we commend the keeping of silence as a time for prayer and reflection. The holy season of Advent is a time of watchfulness and a season of preparation. We are eager to celebrate the feast of the Incarnation – Christmas. But as with all “pregnancies” there is first a time for waiting.

*All baptized persons – regardless of denomination or age – are invited to receive the sacrament with us. All are welcome to the Table; even if you choose to not receive, you may wish to receive a blessing. Gluten-free bread is provided for those who request it; please let one of the clergy or ushers know of your request.*

## **ABOUT OUR WORSHIP:**

The liturgy that we use for worship is from the red Book of Common Prayer (**BCP**). **Bold** print is to be spoken by the people of God.

The hymnals used for our worship service are indicated by their name, and the specific hymn by its associated number. The blue hymnal book located in your pew book rack is the “1982 Hymnal.”

**THE ADVENT WREATH:** The Advent wreath, as we know it today, was first used in 16th century Germany. The Advent wreath may have some local differences and meanings, but in general, the wreath has four candles around the wreath, and one candle in the center. The candles can be seen with varying colors: sometimes purple (meaning a season of penitence, much like Lent), or they may be a deep blue (meaning a season of hope and waiting). The candle representing the Third Sunday of Advent is often pink, to represent “Joy” and is called “Gaudete Sunday” (from the Latin, “Gaudete in Domino semper” meaning, “Rejoice in the Lord always”). The candle in the center is nearly always white, to represent the purity of Christ.

## HOLY EUCHARIST – RITE II

**GATHERING HYMN:** *O come, O come Emmanuel, vv. 5, 6*

**Hymnal 56**

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN:** *Thy kingdom come, O God!*

**Hymnal 613**

### THE WORD OF GOD

#### **OPENING ACCLAMATION**

**BCP 299**

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
**And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

There is one Body and one Spirit;  
**There is one hope in God's call to us;**  
One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;  
**One God and Father of all.**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

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.**

#### **FIRST READING:** *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.**

**Psalm 146:4-9**

4 Happy are they who have the God of  
Jacob for their help! whose hope is  
in the LORD their God;

5 Who made heaven and earth, the  
seas, and all that is in them;  
who keeps his promise for ever;

6 Who gives justice to those who are  
oppressed, and food to those who  
hunger.

7 The LORD sets the prisoners free;  
the LORD opens the eyes of the blind;  
the LORD lifts up those who are  
bowed down;

8 The LORD loves the righteous;  
the LORD cares for the stranger;  
he sustains the orphan and widow,  
but frustrates the way of the wicked.

9 The LORD shall reign for ever,  
your God, O Zion, throughout all  
generations. Hallelujah!

**SECOND READING:** *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:**

*On Jordan's bank, the Baptist's cry*

**Hymnal 76**

**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. Patrick Perkins

**THE HOLY BAPTISM**

**BCP 301**

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|------------------|--|
| Celebrant        | The Candidate for Holy Baptism will now be presented.  |
| Parents/Sponsors | <b>I present Eduardo Michael to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.</b>  |
| Celebrant        | Will you be responsible for seeing that the child you present is brought up in the Christian faith and life? |
| Parents/Sponsors | <b>I will, with God’s help.</b>  |
| Celebrant        | Will you by your prayers and witness help him to grow into the full stature of Christ?                       |
| Parents/Sponsors | <b>I will, with God’s help.</b>  |

*Baptismal questions for parents/sponsors:*

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|------------------|--|
| Celebrant        | Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God? |
| Parents/Sponsors | <b>I renounce them.</b>  |

Celebrant	Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?
Parents/Sponsors	<b>I renounce them.</b>
Celebrant	Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?
Parents/Sponsors	<b>I renounce them.</b>
Celebrant	Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?
Parents/Sponsors	<b>I do.</b>
Celebrant	Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?
Parents/Sponsors	<b>I do.</b>
Celebrant	Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?
Parents/Sponsors	<b>I do.</b>
Celebrant	Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support him in his life in Christ?
People	<b>We will.</b>
Celebrant	Let us join with Eddie who is committing himself to Christ and renew our own baptismal covenant.

## THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

BCP 304

Celebrant	Do you believe in God the Father?
People	<b>I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.</b>
Celebrant	Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?
People	<b>I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.</b>
Celebrant	Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?
People	<b>I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.</b>
Celebrant	Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?
People	<b>I will, with God's help.</b>

Celebrant	Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
People	<b>I will, with God's help.</b>
Celebrant	Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?
People	<b>I will, with God's help.</b>
Celebrant	Will you seek and serve Christ in all people, loving your neighbor as yourself?
People	<b>I will, with God's help.</b>
Celebrant	Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?
People	<b>I will, with God's help.</b>

## PRAYERS FOR THE CANDIDATE

**BCP 305**

Celebrant	Let us now pray for Eddie who is to receive the Sacrament of new birth.
Leader	Deliver him, O Lord, from the way of sin and death.
People	<b>Lord, hear our prayer.</b>
Leader	Open his heart to your grace and truth.
People	<b>Lord, hear our prayer.</b>
Leader	Fill him with your holy and life-giving Spirit.
People	<b>Lord, hear our prayer.</b>
Leader	Keep him in the faith and communion of your holy Church.
People	<b>Lord, hear our prayer.</b>
Leader	Teach him to love others in the power of the Spirit.
People	<b>Lord, hear our prayer.</b>
Leader	Send him into the world in witness to your love.
People	<b>Lord, hear our prayer.</b>
Leader	Bring him to the fullness of your peace and glory.
People	<b>Lord, hear our prayer.</b>
Celebrant	Grant, O Lord, that all who are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ your Son may live in the power of his resurrection and look for him to come again in glory; who lives and reigns now and for ever. <b>Amen.</b>

## THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

BCP 306

Celebrant      The Lord be with you.  
People        **And also with you.**

Celebrant      Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
People        **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Celebrant      We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life.

We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Now sanctify this water, we pray you, by the power of your Holy Spirit, that those who here are cleansed from sin and born again may continue for ever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Savior. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## THE BAPTISM

BCP 307

Eddie, I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

Eddie, you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever.  
**Amen.**

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon this your servant the forgiveness of sin, and have raised him to the new life of grace. Sustain him, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give him an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. **Amen.**

Let us welcome the newly baptized.



**We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood.**

**THE PEACE**

**BCP 360**

**THE HOLY COMMUNION**

**OFFERTORY HYMN:**

*Watchman, tell us of the night*

**Hymnal 640**

**OFFERTORY PRESENTATION AND DOXOLOGY**

**Tune: Hymnal 380**

***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. Amen.***

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING: Eucharistic Prayer A**

**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 God thanks and praise.***

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and every where to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

*Here a Proper Preface is sung or said on all Sundays, and on other occasions as appointed.*

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:

**SANCTUS**

**Hymnal S130**

***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.***

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, 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 we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. 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 for ever. **AMEN.**

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

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.**

**FRACTION ANTHEM:**

Agnus Dei

**Hymnal S164**

**COMMUNION HYMN:**

*The great forerunner of the morn*

**Hymnal 272**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**BCP 365**

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.

**ADVENT BLESSING**

**CLOSING HYMN:**

*Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!*

**Hymnal 437**

**THE DISMISSAL**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SERVERS THIS WEEK**

Altar Guild: Dave Lucas, Mike Reno, Carolyn Schmidt

Nursing Home: Chris Berglund

Ushers: Jeffrey and Nancy Plante

Reader: Kathy Dixon

LEMs: Christina Melzar and Tina Chen

Coffee Hour: The Dixon Family

# St. Francis Episcopal Church



Bearing Witness  
to  
Christ's Love

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