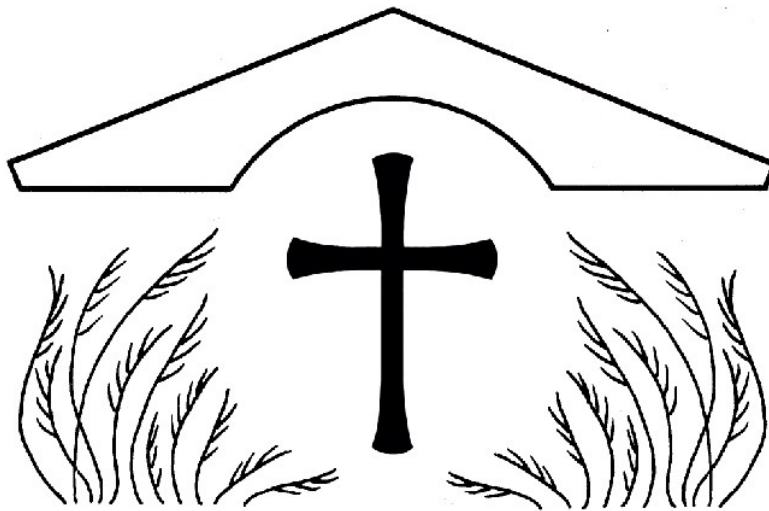


# ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**Fourth Sunday in Lent**

March 10, 2024



Ministers

Rector

Deacon

Senior Warden

Junior Warden

Minister of Music

Cantor

Administrative Assistant

The People of the Parish

The Rev. Christy Laborda Harris

The Rev. Kate Sefton

Jean Farmer

Meg Nalley

Miles McKenzie

Kristina Ibarra

Jun Kim

**Welcome to the holy season of Lent!** Lent is the 40 day period from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday. Lent is a time of return, a time of refocusing our lives and hearts. It is a time of austerity with extra prayer and meditation to prepare ourselves to appreciate the full joy and glory of Easter and the good news of God's power over death. Traditionally we do not use altar flowers during this season, giving the altar a simpler and more sedate appearance. And we save our joyful shouts of "Alleluia" until Easter. We make these changes in order to set this time aside and mark it as different.

Many people think that Lent is a fearful dark time, but we need to remember that we know the end of the story. We are loved by the God who is stronger than death. There is nothing to fear! We are not observing Lent because we were bad or in order to make God love us. We are observing Lent because we love God and we want to experience God's love for us even more fully.

"Walking in the Wilderness" is a Lenten service written by Pat Bennett and published by the Iona Community.

### The Gathering of the Community

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Be Still and Know

*please stand*

Be still and know that I am God. Be still and know that I

am. Be still and know. Be still. Be. Be.

As desired Final

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**Presider** Driven by the Spirit Jesus went out to inhabit a liminal place. For forty days and nights, homeless and weary, famished and footsore, he wandered and watched and wrestled ...

**People** **For forty days and nights, companioned and comforted by animals and angels, he traversed and tested and tempered... And then, knowing who he was, seeing where he must go, understanding what he should do, Jesus, filled with the Spirit, returned from the uncharted place to do the work of the Kingdom.**

**Presider** Jesus, by your example you challenge us to make this season a journey of discovery;

People **As we leave comforting landmarks behind to inhabit and explore our own uncharted places, help us to discern who we are and embrace what we might become.**

Presider Jesus, by your words and actions you show us how to watch and wait and wrestle;

People **As we listen now to those familiar stories and savor afresh your wit and wisdom, help us to recognize where we are and envisage where we need to move to.**

Presider Jesus, you offer us your company in the known and the unknown places;

People **As we touch hands with you now through story and song, and in bread and wine, help us to better understand the threads of our lives and see how to weave them with yours into the patterns of God's Kingdom.**

#### CONFESSION

Deacon God of the in-between thin places, you draw us into the quietness of the desert so that we can encounter ourselves...

People **But we confess that all too often we stubbornly cling to false images rather than face the necessity of change.**

Deacon You call us into the emptiness of the desert so that we can confront our desires...

People **But we confess that all too often we continue to choose our own comfort rather than serving the needs of others.**

Deacon You drive us into the dangers of the desert so that we can engage with your Kingdom...

People **But we confess that all too often we prefer the smooth roads of safety over the perilous pathways of justice.**

**Forgive us, O God, wherever we have chosen to be, or do, or dare less than you have asked of us; and as we walk on in the desert with you, help us watch and wrestle with these things so that we might choose differently in future.**

## ABSOLUTION

God forgives you.  
Forgive others;  
Forgive yourself.

God strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in life eternal. **Amen.**

## The Liturgy of the Word

### THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**  
Let us pray.

God, rich in mercy, whose light reveals the truth of things, the judgement we bring on ourselves: we thank you that you sent your Son to save and not condemn; in his self-giving love may life abundant reign; through Jesus Christ, who was lifted up for us. **Amen.**

### A READING FROM THE BOOK OF NUMBERS (21:4-9)

*please be seated*

From Mount Hor the Israelites set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 107:1-3, 17-22

- 1 We give you thanks, O God, for you are good; \*  
your mercy endures for ever.**
- 2 Let all those whom you have redeemed proclaim \*  
that you redeemed them from the hand of the foe.**
- 3 You gathered them out of the lands; \*  
from the east and from the west,  
from the north and from the south.**
- 17 Some were fools and took to rebellious ways; \*  
they were afflicted because of their sins.**
- 18 They abhorred all manner of food \*  
and drew near to death's door.**
- 19 Then they cried to you in their trouble, \*  
and you delivered them from their distress.**
- 20 You sent forth your word and healed them \*  
and saved them from the grave.**
- 21 Let them give thanks to you for your mercy \*  
and the wonders you do for your children.**
- 22 Let them offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving \*  
and tell of your acts with shouts of joy.**

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A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS (2:1-10)

You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like

everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-- by grace you have been saved-- and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God-- not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL READING

John 3:14-21

*please stand*

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

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus said, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

SERMON

The Rev. Kate Sefton

*please be seated*

*A period of silent reflection follows the sermon*







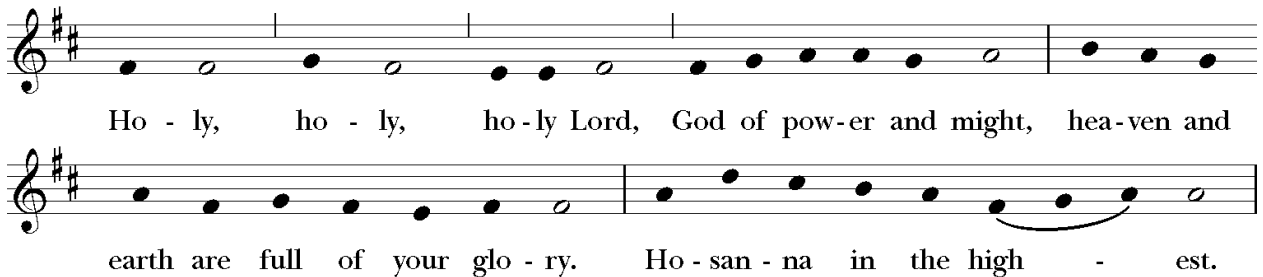
## EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Presider        The Lord be with you.  
People         **And also with you.**  
Presider        Lift up your hearts.  
People         **We lift them to the Lord.**  
Presider        Let us give thanks to the Lord.  
People         **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Like a tent in the wilderness the table of God stands open and ready as a place of sanctuary and safety, of hospitality and healing. So come, all you who are tired and travel-stained, footsore and famished; come with your fellow travelers and find companionship and comfort; for here, Jesus – who knows what it is to wander, watch and wrestle in desert places – waits to meet us and welcome us in, offering us rest and restoration, solace and strength, for the journey still to come.

Before going out into the wilderness of the Garden, Jesus sat down to eat and drink with his friends. To show them the challenge of the way ahead, and offer them gifts for that journey, he took bread – sustaining and wholesome – gave it to his friends and said, “Take, eat: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.” He poured wine – earthy and warming – and said “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.” He shared these gifts as signs of his continuing presence with them throughout time to come.

**And now, remembering that moment, and recognizing that its promise is also for us in this time and place, we too break bread and pour wine to share with one another. And in that action, we recognize and affirm with joy that Christ is present with us now, and throughout time to come; and we join our voices with those of all creation in the unending song of praise:**



The musical notation consists of two staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the hymn: "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might, hea - ven and". The second staff contains the melody for the second line: "earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est." The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a mix of quarter and eighth notes, and a final long note on "est.".

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might, hea - ven and  
earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high - est.

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God of the thresholds, of in between times and spaces, send down upon us now, and on these gifts of bread and wine, that same Spirit who drove Jesus into the desert, that we too may be tempered and strengthened by your Presence and refreshed and renewed through your love.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

As Christ teaches us, we pray,

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

**BREAKING OF THE BREAD**

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world:  
 have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
 sins of the world: have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,  
 you take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace.

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The tent side is open, the table is set, and God waits for us to come in from the desert for a while and be refreshed. Wherever you are on your journey of faith,

**You are welcome at this table.**

*All are welcome at the Lord's table. You are invited to come forward when the ushers indicate and stand or kneel at the communion rail. Please extend your hands together to receive the bread. Our bread is gluten free. To receive the chalice, please help guide it to your lips. We are no longer intincting (dipping the bread). If you do not wish to receive the chalice, cross your arms and the chalice bearer will still say the words but not expect you to sip. If you prefer not to receive either bread or wine and would like a blessing, please cross your arms across your chest.*

COMMUNION HYMN

Come now, O Prince of Peace



1. Come now, O Prince of Peace, make us one bod - y,  
 2. Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y,  
 3. Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior,  
 4. Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y,  
 Korean: O - so - so o - so - so, pyong-hwa eui im - gum



Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec-on-cile your peo - ple.  
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec-on-cile your peo - ple.  
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec-on-cile all na - tions.  
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec-on-cile all na - tions.  
 U - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - so.

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COMMUNION HYMN

448 O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

*please stand*

We thank you God for nourishing us.

**God has called us to journey for a season through the wilderness places; And so, as Jesus did before us, we will set out once more to wander in an uncomfortable landscape and wrestle with its challenges, that through the tempering action of the Spirit, we may emerge ready to do the work of the Kingdom. Amen.**

BLESSING

Look with compassion, O Lord, upon this your people; that, observing this holy season, we may know you more fully, and to learn to serve you with a more perfect will; and the blessing of God the Father, the Son, and be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RECESSIONAL HYMN

490 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

*please stand*

DISMISSAL

Let us go forth into the world, journeying with the Spirit.

**Thanks be to God.**