

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

December 31, 2023



OUR MISSION

To bring by the power of the Holy Spirit as many people as possible to know, love, and serve God as revealed through Jesus Christ; and to be transformed into spiritually renewed disciples of Jesus who know, love and serve one another and the world.



ST. MARTIN'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

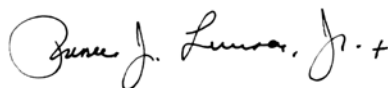
FROM THE RECTOR

IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD,
JESUS CHRIST, WELCOME.

Jesus' first words to His earliest disciples were very simple, "Come, follow Me..." (Matthew 4:19) It was a gentle invitation to take seriously the wonderful journey of faith found in Christ. For more than 2,000 years, people of all ages have responded to that invitation through a personal decision to follow Jesus Christ in a community of prayer, study and service. St. Martin's is just such a place.

St. Martin's is a member Church in the Diocese of Texas, The Episcopal Church in the United States of America and the greater worldwide Anglican Communion consisting of more than 77 million people. Our Parish Church considers it a tremendous honor to be a place where men, women, youth and children can grow in their personal relationship with our Lord, come to know and use their own spiritual gifts, and discover a personal ministry to be expressed both in the Church, the greater Houston area and beyond.

I want to personally invite you to participate in our worship services and as many of our activities and ministries as your own commitments and time will allow.



The Rev. Dr. Russell J. Levenson, Jr., Rector

Prayers Before Worship

O Lord, we thank You that You have called us as members of Your family into this beautiful house of God. Grant that here we may feel Your presence and the beauty of Your peace, and that, as we return to our homes and work, we may sense Your guiding hand and loving care and be used in the service of our neighbors, our nation and the world, and all You send our way, through Him Who came not to condemn the world but to save it, Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

NOTICES

St. Martin's is a gun-free campus.

St. Martin's asks that anyone coming into a worship service not bring oversized or large backpacks.

**indicates when latecomers may be seated so as not to disturb other worshippers*

THIS WEEK AT ST. MARTIN'S

Christian Education for Adults, Children's Ministry and 7-1-7 Students will not be offered today in observance of the New Year holiday. Please join us next Sunday, Jan. 7, when Christian Education classes resume.

St. Martin's Campus will be closed Monday, Jan. 1, for the New Year holiday.

JANUARY 1-6

Adults

Blanket Ladies

Wednesday, Jan. 3

10-11:30 a.m. | Activity Center, Family Room

Make receiving blankets for newborn infants at local charity hospitals. For more information, contact the Rev. Sharron Cox at 713-830-4131 or scox@smec.org.

Church Tours

Wednesday, Jan. 3

11 a.m.-noon | The Church

The Docent Guild offers a formal tour of The Church. To schedule a group tour or special tours of The Church windows, Christ Chapel or Campus gardens, please contact the Docent Line at 713-830-4117. For more information, contact the Rev. Sharron Cox at 713-830-4131 or scox@smec.org.

Parish Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, Jan. 4

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 7-9 p.m.

Choir Rehearsal Hall

Sing a variety of traditional music in service to the Lord and our congregation. For more information, contact Dr. David Henning at 713-985-3820 or dhenning@smec.org.

HOLY EUCHARIST

Holy Eucharist at 8 a.m. is a spoken service.

Musical pieces in this booklet will be skipped or replaced by spoken liturgy, as noted.

The 6 p.m. service will not be offered today in observance of the New Year's holiday.

VOLUNTARY "Trumpet Tune"

David Johnson

The Celebrant greets the People. Following the greeting, all stand.

*HYMN 542 "Christ is the World's True Light"

1 Christ is the world's true Light, its Cap-tain of sal - va - tion,
2 In Christ all rac - es meet, their an-cient feuds for - get - ting;
3 One Lord, in one great Name u - nite us all who own thee;

the Day - star clear and bright of ev - ery race and na - tion;
the whole round world com - plete, from sun-rise to its set - ting;
cast out our pride and shame that hin-der to en - throne thee;

new life, new hope a - wakes, for all who own his sway;
when Christ is throned as Lord all shall for - sake their fear,
the world has wait - ed long, has tra - vailed long in pain;

**indicates when latecomers may be seated so as not to disturb other worshippers*



freedom her bondage breaks, and night is turned to day.
 to plough-share beat the sword, to pruning-hook the spear.
 to heal its ancient wrong, come, Prince of Peace, and reign.

Words: George Wallace Briggs (1875–1959), alt.; Music: *St. Joan*, Percy E. B. Collier (b. 1895); Copyright: Words: By permission of Oxford University Press.

Celebrant: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People: And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

The Celebrant says

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GLORIA (*said at 8 a.m.; sung at 9 and 11:15 a.m.*)



Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
 to his feet thy tribute bring; ransomed,
 healed, restored, forgiven, evermore his
 praises sing: Alleluia, alleluia!
 Praise the everlasting King.

Words: Henry Francis Lyte (1793–1847); Music: *Lauda anima*, John Goss (1800–1880).

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And with thy spirit.

Celebrant: Let us pray. (*kneel*)

The Celebrant says the Collect

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

THE LESSON Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Moses said, “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

All stand.

HYMN 365 (vs. 1-2).....“Come Thou Almighty King”

1 Come, thou al - might - y King, help us thy Name to sing,
 2 Come, thou in - car - nate Word, by heaven and earth a - dored;
 3 Come, ho - ly Com - fort - er, thy sa - cred wit - ness bear
 4 To Thee, great One in Three, the high - est prais - es be,

help us to praise. Fa - ther whose love un-known all things cre-
 our prayer at - tend: come, and thy peo - ple bless; come, give thy
 in this glad hour: thou, who al - might - y art, now rule in
 hence ev - er - more; thy sov - ereign ma - jes - ty may we in

at - ed own, build in our hearts thy throne, An - cient of Days.
 word suc - cess; stab - lish thy right - eous - ness, Sa - vior and friend.
 ev - ery heart, and ne'er from us de - part, Spi - rit of power.
 glo - ry see, and to e - ter - ni - ty love and a - dore.

Words: Anonymous, ca. 1757, alt.; Music: *Moscow*, Felice de Giardini (1716–1796); harm. *The New Hymnal*, 1916, based on *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 1875, and Lowel Mason (1792–1872).

Deacon: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

People: Glory be to thee, O Lord.

THE GOSPELLuke 14:25-33

Now large crowds were traveling with Jesus; and he turned and said to them, “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.”

Deacon: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise be to thee, O Christ.

The remaining readings for the day are on page 24-25.

HYMN 365 (*vs. 3-4*).....“Come Thou Almighty King”

1 Come, thou al - might - y King, help us thy Name to sing,
 2 Come, thou in - car - nate Word, by heaven and earth a - dored;
 3 Come, ho - ly Com - fort - er, thy sa - cred wit - ness bear
 4 To Thee, great One in Three, the high - est prais - es be,

help us to praise. Fa - ther whose love un - known all things cre -
 our prayer at - tend: come, and thy peo - ple bless; come, give thy
 in this glad hour: thou, who al - might - y art, now rule in
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at - ed own, build in our hearts thy throne, An - cient of Days.
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 glo - ry see, and to e - ter - ni - ty love and a - dore.

Words: Anonymous, ca. 1757, alt.; Music: *Moscow*, Felice de Giardini (1716–1796); harm. *The New Hymnal*, 1916, based on *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 1875, and Lowel Mason (1792–1872).

Please be seated.

THE SERMON“What’s in Your Wallet?”

The Rev. Dr. Russell J. Levenson, Jr.

THE NICENE CREED *(stand)*

Celebrant and People

I believe in one God,

**the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible;**

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,

**the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation**

**came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the
Virgin Mary,
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried;
and the third day he rose again according to
the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of the Father,
and he shall come again, with glory,
to judge both the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.**

And I believe in the Holy Ghost the Lord, and Giver of Life,

**who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together
is worshiped
and glorified;**

**who spake by the Prophets.
And I believe one holy catholic and
apostolic Church;
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission
of sins;
and I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *(kneel)*

Minister and People pray responsively

Father, we pray for thy holy catholic Church;

That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly
serve thee;

That thy Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for Justin, the Archbishop of Canterbury; Michael, our
Presiding Bishop; Andy, Jeff, Kai and Hector, our bishops; the
Clergy of this Parish; in the Anglican Communion cycle of prayer,
for the Anglican Church of Rwanda; for all bishops, priests
and deacons;

That they may be faithful ministers of thy Word and Sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the
world; especially for Joe, our President, Greg, our Governor, Sylvester,
our Mayor, and the Congress and the Courts.

That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do thy will in all that we undertake;

That our works may find favor in thy sight.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble; for
those who are hospitalized, especially ___; for those for whom our
prayers have requested, especially ___; for those on our continuing
prayer list, especially ___;

That they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed eternal rest, especially ___;

Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We give thee thanks for all the blessings of this life, especially those remembered today with Altar flowers, ___; and we praise thee for thy saints who have entered into joy;

May we also come to share in thy heavenly kingdom.

In this moment of silence, let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

A period of silence, during which people may add their own petitions quietly in the privacy of their hearts.

Celebrant adds a concluding Collect

O God, who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thy only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our Judge; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

Minister says

Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God.

A moment of silence is observed.

Minister and People

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

Celebrant stands and says

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE PEACE *(stand)*

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And with thy spirit.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please see page 28 for upcoming events.

Please be seated.

THE OFFERTORY

ANTHEM “Here I Am, Lord”

Daniel L. Schutte

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry. All who dwell in dark and sin, My hand will save. I, who made the stars of night, I will make the darkness bright. Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send? Here I am, Lord. Is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart. I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have born my people’s pain. I have wept for love of them. They turn away. I will break their hearts of stone, Give them hearts for love alone, I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send? I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame, I will set a feast for them. My hand will save. Finest bread I will provide Till their hearts be satisfied. I will give my life for them. Whom shall I send?

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AT THE PRESENTATION

(8 a.m. only in place of sung Doxology)

Celebrant: All things come of thee, O Lord;

People: And of thine own have we given thee.

DOXOLOGY.....*Lasst uns erfreuen*

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow. Praise him all crea - tures here be -
low. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Praise him a -
bove ye heaven - ly host. Praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.
Refrain
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Words: Thomas Ken (1637-1711); Music: *Lasst uns erfreuen*, melody from *Auserlesene Catholische Geistliche Kirchengeseng*, 1623; adapt. Ralph Vaughan William (1872-1958).

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (*stand*)

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And with thy spirit.

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up unto the Lord.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

People: It is meet and right so to do.

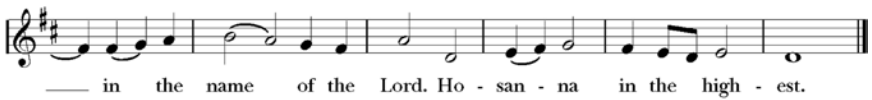
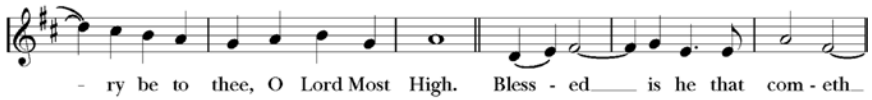
It is very meet, right and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God.

Because thou didst give Jesus Christ, thine only Son, to be born for us; who, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, was made very Man of the substance of the Virgin Mary his mother; that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin, and receive power to become thy children.

Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying,

SANCTUS AND BENEDEICTUS

(said at 8 a.m.; sung at 9 and 11:15 a.m.)



Music: From *Missa de Sancta Maria Magdalena*, Healey Willan (1880–1968); Copyright: By permission of Oxford University Press.

The Celebrant continues (kneel)

All glory be to thee, O Lord our God, for that thou didst create heaven and earth, and didst make us in thine own image; and, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him, and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption. He made there a full and perfect sacrifice for the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.

For in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread; and when he had given thanks to thee, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Likewise, after supper, he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink this, all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, we thy people do celebrate and make, with these thy holy gifts which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; and looking for his coming again with power and great glory.

And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us, and, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, to bless and sanctify these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the Body and Blood of thy dearly-beloved Son Jesus Christ.

And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, whereby we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies. Grant, we beseech thee, that all who partake of this Holy Communion may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, and be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction; and also that we and all thy whole Church may be made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord;

By whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. **AMEN.**

And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say,

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Celebrant and People

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

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

(8 a.m. only in place of sung Fraction Anthem)

Celebrant: Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

FRACTION ANTHEM *Celtic Alleluia*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Text: *Celtic Alleluia*, Christopher Walker; Music: Fintan O'Carroll and Christopher Walker; © 1985, Fintan O'Carroll and Christopher Walker, public by OCP Publications. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted under LicenSingOnline #U3219.

The Celebrant says the Invitation.

All Christians who have been baptized with water and in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and are permitted to receive Holy Communion in their own church are welcome to do so on this occasion. If you do not wish to receive one or both Elements, cross your arms over your chest and the Clergy will give you a blessing. Please tell the Clergy administering Communion if you wish to receive a gluten-free wafer.

ANTHEM “Still, Still, Still”

Norman Luboff

Still, still, still one can hear the falling snow. For all is hushed, the world is sleeping, Holy Star its vigil keeping. Still, still, still one can hear the falling snow. Sleep, sleep, sleep, 'tis the eve of our Saviour's birth. The night is peaceful all around you, close your eyes, let sleep surround you. Sleep, sleep, sleep 'tis the eve of our Saviour's birth. Dream, dream, dream of the joyous day to come. While guardian angels without number, Watch you as you sweetly slumber. Dream, dream, dream of the joyous day to come.

Text: Marilyn Keith and Alan Bergman. Music: Austrian Carol, arr. by Norman Luboff. © 1958-1960 Walton Music Corp.

HYMN “How Great Thou Art”

1. O Lord my God, when I in awe - some won - der Con - sid - er
 2. When through the woods and for - est glades I wan - der And hear the
 3. And when I think that God, his Son not spar - ing, Sent him to
 4. When Christ shall come with shout of ac - cla - ma - tion And take me

1. all the worlds* thy hands have made, — I see the stars I hear the roll - ing*
 2. birds sing sweet - ly in the trees, — When I look down from loft - y moun - tain
 3. die, I scarce can take it in, — That on the cross, my bur - den glad - ly
 4. home, what joy shall fill my heart! — Then I shall bow in hum - ble ad - o -

1. thun - der, Thy pow'r through - out the u - ni - verse dis - played. —
 2. gran - deur, And hear the brook and feel the gen - tle breeze. —
 3. bear - ing, He bled and died to take a - way my sin. —
 4. ra - tion, And there pro - claim, my God how great thou art. —

Then sings my soul, my Sav - ior, God, to Thee: — How great Thou

art, how great Thou art! Then sings my soul, my Sav - ior, God, to

Thee: How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

The musical score is written in G minor (one flat) and 4/4 time. The vocal line is on a treble clef staff, and the piano accompaniment is on a bass clef staff. The lyrics are placed below the vocal staff. The score consists of two systems of music. The first system has three measures, and the second system has three measures. The piano accompaniment provides a harmonic foundation with chords and moving bass lines.

Words: Stuart K. Hine (b. 1899); Music: Swedish Folk Melody; arr. Stuart K. Hine; Copyright: Words and arr. © 1953. Renewed 1981 MANNA MUSIC, INC. 15510 Stanford, Suite 101, Valencia, CA 91355. International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

HYMN "As the Deer"

As the deer pant-eth for the wa-ter, so my
 You're my friend and you are my broth-er ev-en
 I want you more than gold or sil-ver, on-ly
 soul long-eth af-ter you. You a-lone are my heart's de-sire— and I
 though you— are a King. I love you more than an-y oth-er, so much
 you can— sat-is-ify. You a-lone are the real joy-giv-er and the
 long to wor-ship you. You a-lone are my strength, my shield; To
 more than an-y-thing. ap-ple of my eye.
 you a-lone may my spir-it yield.
 You a-lone are my heart's de-sire,— and I long to wor-ship you.

Words and Music: Martin Nystrom; CCLI Song #1431; © 1984 Maranatha Praise, Inc.; All rights Reserved. CCLI #805314.

After Communion, the Celebrant says (kneel)

Let us pray.

Celebrant and People

Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom. And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

At 9 and 11:15 a.m., after the Post-Communion Prayer, members of the Shepherd's Guild may come forward. The priest or deacon gives the Sacrament to the Eucharistic visitors, saying

In the name of this congregation, I send you forth bearing these holy gifts, that those to whom you go may share with us the Communion of Christ's body and blood. We who are many are one body, because we share one bread, one cup. **Amen.**

THE BLESSING

All stand.

HYMN 432 "O Praise Ye the Lord"

1 O praise ye the Lord! Praise him in the height;
 2 O praise ye the Lord! Praise him up - on earth,
 *3 O praise ye the Lord! All things that give sound;
 4 O praise ye the Lord! Thanks - giv - ing and song

re - joice in his word, ye an - gels of light;
 in tune - ful ac - cord, all ye of new birth;
 each ju - bi - lant chord re - ech - o a - round;
 to him be out - poured all a - ges a - long!

ye hea - vens, a - dore him by whom ye were made,
 praise him who hath brought you his grace from a - bove,
 loud or - gans, his glo - ry forth tell in deep tone,
 For love in cre - a - tion, for hea - ven re - stored,

and wor - ship be - fore him, in bright - ness ar - rayed.
 praise him who hath taught you to sing of his love.
 and sweet harp, the sto - ry of what he hath done.
 for grace of sal - va - tion, O praise ye the Lord!

Words: Henry Williams Baker (1821–1877), alt.; based on Psalms 148 and 150; Music: *Laudate Dominum*, Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848–1918).

THE DISMISSAL

A Minister says the dismissal

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

Personal prayers are available at the west Side Chapel after this service.

RECOGNITIONS



FLOWERS GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD

In thanksgiving for the marriage of Elizabeth Holstien and Chris Nerren
by Jodie and Jeff Holstien



SYMPATHY

Sept. 19 Marilyn Debach Taylor

Nov. 12 Dianne Miller Brock

Nov. 19 Jack H. Mayfield, Jr.

Dec. 9 David Chase Gardner

To mark a special occasion with an altar flower dedication,
visit bit.ly/smecaltarflowers or contact Rebekah Maddux El-Hakam
at relhakam@smec.org.

SERMON NOTES

READINGS FOR THE DAY

THE PSALM Psalm 147

- 1 Hallelujah!
How good it is to sing praises to our God! *
how pleasant it is to honor him with praise!
- 2 The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem; *
he gathers the exiles of Israel.
- 3 He heals the brokenhearted *
and binds up their wounds.
- 4 He counts the number of the stars *
and calls them all by their names.
- 5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; *
there is no limit to his wisdom.
- 6 The Lord lifts up the lowly, *
but casts the wicked to the ground.
- 7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; *
make music to our God upon the harp.
- 8 He covers the heavens with clouds *
and prepares rain for the earth;
- 9 He makes grass to grow upon the mountains *
and green plants to serve mankind.
- 10 He provides food for flocks and herds *
and for the young ravens when they cry.
- 11 He is not impressed by the might of a horse; *
he has no pleasure in the strength of a man;
- 12 But the Lord has pleasure in those who fear him, *
in those who await his gracious favor.]
- 13 Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem; *
praise your God, O Zion;
- 14 For he has strengthened the bars of your gates; *
he has blessed your children within you.

READINGS FOR THE DAY

- 15 He has established peace on your borders; *
he satisfies you with the finest wheat.
- 16 He sends out his command to the earth, *
and his word runs very swiftly.
- 17 He gives snow like wool; *
he scatters hoarfrost like ashes.
- 18 He scatters his hail like bread crumbs; *
who can stand against his cold?
- 19 He sends forth his word and melts them; *
he blows with his wind, and the waters flow.
- 20 He declares his word to Jacob, *
his statutes and his judgments to Israel.
- 21 He has not done so to any other nation; *
to them he has not revealed his judgments.
Hallelujah!

THE EPISTLE Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

CONTINUING PRAYERS

Individuals are included on the Continuing Prayers list for numerous reasons, some of which may include recovery from illness, thanksgiving or need for support for special ministry and mission. In addition to praying for participants in cancer support groups, the Alzheimer's Caregiver's Support Group and The Gathering, this week please pray for the following:

Robin Adair	Bruce Michael Lee	Alexi
Bobbie Adams	Nancy Liles	Atticus
Carolyn Alban	Nicole Holdford Lockney	Henry
Katie and Harvey Altmann	Ryan Logan	Laura
Scotty Arnoldy	Bella Martin	Lynne
Ally Babineaux	Ronnie Martin	
Shelly Bain	Janet McDaniel	
Kathy Beadnell	Barbara McMahon	
Beth Beathard	Len Menefee	
Bob Beeley	Margaret Milner	
Cory Blackman	Ruth Moorhead	
Kenny Brown	Clarine Naskrent	
Bella Carosi	Stuart Nixon	
Cole Cattan	Ann Noel	
Debbie Chernosky	Deborah Oliver	
Doug Clarke	Andrew O'Malley	
Hallie Cooley	Bob Paddock	
Michael Craig	Jim Paddock	
Gail Davis	Judy Peach	
Ross Dunn	Betty Polando	
Kiersten Dyke	Joseph Powell	
Jim Easterling	Heather Rathnau	
Stacey and John Elliott	Dana Raymant	
Charles Flores	Ted Reed	
Julie G.	Marjorie Reeks	
Catherine Gonzales	Phyllis Reinhardt	
Nancy Gore	Monica Rivera	
Bette Haidusek	John Davis Roady	
Ann Halverson	Joe Rodriguez	
Kayla Hamaker	Maggie Rodriguez	
Amy Heath	Suzzy Schuwerk	
Mollie Hill	Helen and Jim Shaffer	
Marilyn Ingham	Caroline Shanahan	
Mary and Jim Jennings	Clif Shoemake	
Mary Anne Kannard	Bob Spencer	
Candi Keebler	Paul Therrien	
Dick Kilday	LaVonne Waldron	
Reggie Lang	Mary Watters	
Rhea Latta	Eric Zoerb	

Please be advised that we will be updating the Continuing Prayers list twice a year in the weeks after Easter and All Saints' Day. The list will be completely redone. To add or remove someone on the Continuing Prayers list, please contact Valerie Rivera at 713-985-3817 or vriviera@smec.org.

CONTINUING PRAYERS

Prayers for those on Active Military Duty in the Armed Forces:

Lt. Col. Wesley J. Hunnell

Capt. Blake J. Kidd

Capt. Jack Mullen

1st Lt. Alex Mullen

Lt. Paul Piana

Lt. Col. Thomas C. Plant

LCDR Bradley Hoffman

Please be advised that each year the week after Veterans Day, this list will be completely redone. To add or remove someone on the Military Service Prayers list, please contact Valerie Rivera at 713-985-3817 or vrivera@smec.org.

Year-End Contributions to St. Martin's Episcopal Church



The Internal Revenue Service requires that, in order to be tax deductible in 2023, cash, check or credit card contributions to St. Martin's Episcopal Church must be postmarked by the United States Postal Service **no later than Sunday, Dec. 31, 2023**; this includes any payments to your 2023 pledge, prepayment of your 2024 pledge and payment of your Building for the Ages pledge. The Finance staff is required to check the postal cancellation dates on all receipts in early January to ensure our legal compliance to this rule.

For more information, contact Debbie Hutchison at dhutchison@smec.org or 713-985-3803.

ST. MARTIN'S **OUTREACH** MINISTRIES



Christmas Wrapping Paper Drive

Monday-Friday | 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Front Reception Desk

Please donate your leftover Christmas gift wrap to Outreach Ministries! If you have extra Christmas gift wrap – opened rolls are fine – please drop them off during business hours.

Contact Tracee Tindol at outreach@smec.org
or 713-985-3811 for more information.



**JUST
FOR
EPIPHANY**



Join us in January as we begin a new series, “Just for Epiphany.”

The small group discussions will focus on the Letter of James. Participating in the four-week Bible study provides a meaningful opportunity to meet fellow Parishioners and builds a sense of community.

Registration runs Dec. 28 – Jan. 12 at bit.ly/justforsmallgroups.

For questions, contact the Rev. Wesley Arning or Kathy Johnson, Director of Membership, at smallgroups@smec.org.



SERVICE OF PRAYER FOR
Healing and Wholeness
Order of St. Luke

St. Martin's International Order of St. Luke (OSL) Healing Community offers a service of prayer for healing and wholeness on the first Wednesday of each month. This short service is held for anyone in need of prayer for themselves, friends or family.

Next Service
Wednesday, Jan. 3 | 5 p.m.
Parish Life Center or via Zoom
bit.ly/oslservice

For more information, contact Amanda DeViney at 713-830-4110 or adeviney@smec.org.



Activity Center

WATERCOLOR CLASS!

Wednesday, Jan. 3 | 10:30 a.m.
Fellowship Room

Sign up at bit.ly/smecactivitycenter
MOST CLASSES ARE FREE!

Learn watercolor techniques and styles in this fun class for all levels. All painting supplies are provided.

For more information, contact Sarah-Hampton Cambas at 713-985-3835 or scambas@stmartinsepiscopal.org.

STERLING'S MARKET

Every Saturday • 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

Rain or Shine • Sage and Woodway

Discover unique treasures and fresh foods
from local vendors and farmers!

A portion of the proceeds supports St. Martin's Outreach Ministries.

For more information, contact Justin Jacobson Avery at
info@sterlingsmarket.org or 713-985-3838.

sterlingsmarket.org

The
Order
of the
Daughters
of the King



SATURDAY, JAN. 6 • 10 A.M.
CHILDREN'S LIFE CENTER

SPECIAL SPEAKER

LINDA SHUBERT

Linda Shubert, Texas Gulf Coast Chapter Coordinator of the American Pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago de Compostela will share the deep joy she has found through persevering the trials of the pilgrimage experiences in Spain on the trail.

For more information, please contact Tracee Tindol at tmartin@smec.org or 713-985-3811.

THE
 family table

The Baptism of Our Lord

Sunday, Jan. 7

9:15 a.m. • Parish Life Center

The rite of Holy Baptism is a special occasion for St. Martin's — a service of joy that underscores the communal aspect of worship and expresses God's presence in the midst of His people. Whenever possible, St. Martin's welcomes new members into the Body of Christ on festal days that emphasize the meaning of our Baptism. People of all ages and stages of life are invited to enter into a lifelong journey with Christ through the sacrament of baptism.

For more information, contact Rocio Velazquez at rvlazquez@smec.org or 713-985-3807.



THEOLOGY *for* LIFE



DR. DAVID PETERSON

DAVE ON THE LIFE OF DAVID:

Lessons of Faith from One of the Old

Testament's Most Famous Characters

**Sundays, Jan. 7, 14 and 21
10:15–11 a.m. • Bagby Parish Hall**

Among the Old Testament's diverse cast of characters, the man named David is one of the headliners. His life with God was a roller coaster. No one is more heroic, and no one is more shattered than King David. His life is an illustration of experiencing God across life's full gamut.

In these sessions, we will consider how David experiences God in his call, in the pain of his disastrous failure and God's discipline and their eventual reconciliation. The Bible pays David the high compliment, as "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). We will consider what that means.

Question? Contact Amanda DeViney at adeviney@smec.org or 713-830-4110.



TOUR A GOTHIC-STYLE CHURCH WITHOUT LEAVING HOUSTON!

SUNDAY, JAN. 7

Following the 11:15 a.m. service

Meet in the Narthex

St. Martin's docents offer free, public and private tours.

Everyone is welcome regardless of religious affiliation.

To schedule a tour, please call St. Martin's Docent Guild at 713-830-4117 and leave a contact name and number for a return call.



ACOLYTE APPRECIATION DINNER

Sunday, Jan. 7 • 4 p.m. • Bagby Parish Hall

Acolytes who serve in Family Table and The Church – along with their families – are invited to a dinner that will recognize their contributions which enhance our worship services.

Planning to attend? Sign up at bit.ly/acolytedinner.



FEAST OF LIGHTS SERVICE

Sunday, Jan. 7 • 6 p.m. • The Church

This service will be livestreamed on St. Martin's Facebook and YouTube channels.

Parishioners and friends are invited to this beautiful candlelight Epiphany service that also celebrates St. Martin's Acolytes' and their devotion to supporting worship. The highlight will be a sermon given by a senior Acolyte.

For more information about the dinner or service, contact the Rev. Jane P. Ferguson at jferguson@smec.org or 713-621-3040.

A Change of Heart



Women are invited to this study group on the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship. If yours is difficult, we can offer hope; if yours is great, we can learn from you.

Wednesdays

**Jan. 10 – Feb. 28 • 10:30 a.m. – noon or 1–2:30 p.m.
Student Life Center, Second Floor Mezzanine Lounge**

Each class is limited to the first 20 who register.

To sign up or for more information, contact Graham Neuhaus at gneuhaus@aol.com.

“A Change of Heart” is available for purchase in St. Martin’s Gift Shoppe.
Session one should be completed for the first meeting.

ST. MARTIN’S PRESENTS

A VERY SPECIAL LENTEN RETREAT

MONDAY–THURSDAY

March 18–21 • 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

FRIDAY

March 22 • 8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

The Scout Center

Only four spots remain!

Theresa Harrison returns to St. Martin’s to guide retreatants in creativity with the icon of the Annunciation, the moment of the angel Gabriel’s visit to Mary.

For more information, contact Tracee Tindol at tmartin@smec.org or 713-985-3811.



Registration fee: **\$495**

Includes all supplies and lunch at Café St. Martin’s.

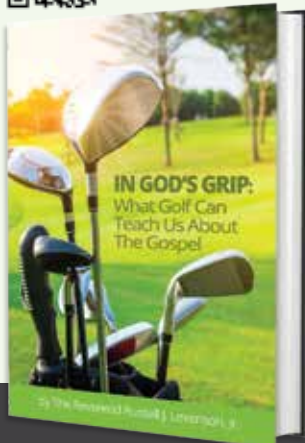
**Register now at
bit.ly/iconretreat2024**



A NEW BOOK by the Rev. Russell J. Levenson, Jr.



Order Your Copy Today!
<https://a.co/d/9hypX4Q>



“IN GOD’S GRIP: What Golf Can Teach Us About The Gospel”

“This delightful little book on what golf can teach us about the most important questions people have about their lives is a truly great read. As a former teenager caddy at the oldest 18-hole course in North America (the Chicago Golf Club), who caddied for the likes of Charlie Coody, Ben Crenshaw, Tom Weiskopf and others, and is pleased to serve as a divinity school dean, I recommend it wholeheartedly.”

— Dr. Doug Sweeney, Dean of Beeson Divinity School

“This is a book about God’s help.”

— Russell J. Levenson, Jr.

Place orders now at St. Martin’s Gift Shoppe
or wherever fine books are sold, contact Barbara
Shoemaker at bshoemaker@smec.org or
713-985-3834.

WAYS *to* GIVE



TEXT

Text SMEC to 73256



MAIL

St. Martin’s Episcopal Church
717 Sage Rd., Houston, TX 77056



ONLINE

bit.ly/smecgiving



BEQUESTS

Contact: Ashley Pratka at
apratka@smec.org or 346-335-8658



TRANSFER OF ASSETS

Pledging and setting up a recurring gift online
helps you and the church budget

For all stewardship questions, contact Debbie Hutchison at
dhutchison@smec.org or 713-985-3803.

OUR STAFF AND VESTRY

SUNDAY PROGRAM STAFF

Dr. David Henning

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dhenning@smec.org

Mr. Keith Lathrom

Choral Director of the Adult Choir
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Ms. Hannah Cen

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The Rev. Jane P. Ferguson

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Director of Children's Ministry
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Mrs. Kathy Johnson

Director of Membership
kjohnson@smec.org

Mrs. Barbara Piana

Verger and Worship Coordinator
bpiana@smec.org

ST. MARTIN'S VESTRY

Vestry Executive Committee

Mr. Tommy Ford, *Senior Warden*
Mrs. Michelle Bain, *Junior Warden*
Mr. Gib Surles, *Missions Chair*
Mr. Dan Meyer, *Treasurer*
Mr. Ryan LaRue, *Clerk*
Mr. Matt Anderson, *Past Senior Warden*
Mr. Bob Heston, Jr., *Parish Stewardship Chair*
Mr. Andy Harvin, *Chancellor**

Vestry Members

Mrs. Nancy Bynon
Mrs. Elizabeth Dukes
Mrs. Whitney Gormley
Mr. Will Hedges
Mr. Matt Mogas
Mr. Roy W. Nichol
Ms. Sherrie Perkins
Mrs. Courtney Schilling
Mr. Logan Walters
Mr. Milton West

Associate Members

The Hon. James A. Baker, III, *Special Counsel to the Vestry**
Mr. David Harvin, *Senior Council Representative 2023-2024*
Mrs. Beth Reeves, *Senior Council Representative 2023-2024*
Mrs. Hope Huber, *Altar Guild President 2023-2024*
Mrs. Kathy Bennett, *ECW President 2023-2024*
Mr. Perry Ruthven, *Men of St. Martin's President 2023-2024*
Mr. Bob Porter, *Usher Representative 2022-2024*

**Denotes Associate Vestry filled at the discretion of the Rector.*



Mrs. Michelle Bain
Vestry Representative

OUR CLERGY

Jesus, The Christ
The Head of This Church



The Rev. Dr. Russell J. Levenson, Jr.
Rector
lthough@smec.org



The Rev. Sharron L. Cox
Associate for Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Ministries
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The Rev. Martin J. Bastian
Vice-Rector
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The Rev. R. Wesley Arning
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The Rev. John D. Sundara
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The Rev. Naomi B. Sundara
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The Rev. Lisa R. Neilson
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The Rev. Jane P. Ferguson
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The Rev. Richard (Dick) H. Elwood
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The Rev. Gillian (Gill) B. Keyworth
Deacon
gkeyworth@smec.org

WE INVITE YOU TO
KEEP THIS BOOKLET
FOR REFERENCE.

*717 Sage Road
Houston, TX 77056
713-621-3040*

SMEC.ORG

