



St. George's
Episcopal
Church

Sunday
December 20, 2020

Blue Christmas
A Service of Remembrance and Hope

5:30 pm via Zoom



You are welcome at
St. George's Church:
Regardless of race,
nationality,
sexual orientation,
gender expression,
or tradition.

December 20, 2020

**The mission of the Church is to
restore all people to unity with God
and each other in Christ.
- Book of Common Prayer, pg. 855**

Welcome to St. George's!

Wherever you are, we are glad you have found our community of worship and prayer, service and care, learning and sharing. In the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, we are continuing to fulfill our mission and invite you to connect with us. If you are new to St. George's or getting reconnected, we hope the information below will be helpful to you. Please check our website www.stgeorgesepiscopal.net and our social media regularly for updates.

Currently we are not meeting in-person out of abundant care and love for the most vulnerable members of the local community and for health care and essential in-person workers.

We are finding many ways to be the church and stay in community online and through personal contacts. We welcome you to explore life in our community. If you are new, fill out a [newcomer form on our website](#) so we can reach out to you.



St. George's
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Request Prayer

We share in each other's joys and concerns. Send us your prayer requests at: bit.ly/stgprayer.

Giving

We believe in a generous, loving, and giving God. We invite our church family to embrace generosity as a lifelong, joyful, transforming, and liberating response to God's call to us. Thank you for your generous support of our ministry that is feeding people in mind, body, and spirit.

Your gifts help fund our ministries and serve the community. You can [give electronically](#), text to give (send a text message with the dollar amount [e.g. \$50] to: 540.701.4133), or mail a check to the church address. Please make year-end donations by December 31 so that we can celebrate your generosity in 2020. For assistance, contact Business Manager [Ben Hicks](#). Thank you for giving!

Will you make an "[estimate of giving](#)" for 2021? This is a personal commitment to generosity and helping St. George's plan ahead.

Worship, Learn, Serve

**"Make me to know your ways,
O Lord; teach me your paths."
Psalm 25:4**

Learning and Growing in Christ

No matter where you are on your faith journey, there's a place for you here.

We offer a number of faith formation opportunities for all ages. You are invited to visit or join at any time.

Some of our regular offerings for growing in faith:

- Bible in a Year reading challenge
- Spiritual Book Group
- Education for Ministry (EFM)
- Sunday adult forums
- [Racial justice and reconciliation](#) resources and book groups

How are you called to serve? Serving builds our parish and local community as we give thanks to God and follow Christ's example.

A few examples of ways to serve:

- Worship leaders and support teams
- Music ministries (singers and instrumentalists)
- The Table in the World: sharing fresh produce in the community every week
- Micah Ecumenical Ministries: dinners and hospitality with neighbors who are homeless
- Media and technical support for livestream services
- Extending care and prayer to church members

Weekly Worship Schedule:

Stay tuned for updates

Sundays:

9 am: Livestream service of the Word: our clergy, lay ministers, and musicians offer readings from scripture, a homily/sermon, hymns and instrumental music, and prayers for the community and the world. Live on YouTube and available afterwards for viewing.

10 am: Adult forum on Zoom: clergy and lay leaders offer discussions on various topics including our Bible in a year challenge. Parish updates are sometimes held at this time also.

www.zoom.us/join or call 929.205.6099

Webinar ID: 392 738 239

Password: 107758

11 am: Zoom Coffee "half-hour" bring your own coffee and connect with other parishioners in an informal conversation facilitated by one of our lay leaders. (same login as formation)

8 pm: Sung Compline on Facebook Live via our [Compline Facebook page](#).

Wednesdays

12 pm: Noon Prayer on Facebook Live

Children Formation Videos:

<http://bit.ly/stgchildrenvideos>

For Youth Ministry offerings, please contact [Hecti Musa](#)

Blue Christmas

December 20, 2020

Adapted from "Winter" by Ruth Burgess,
Wild Goose Publications and "I Believe
Even When..." by Marcia McFee

Welcome to this service. We're glad you're here!

As we prepare to gather at 5:30 pm, reflect on how you are feeling right now. Using one word or phrase, you are invited to type your response in the chat box on Zoom. We also invite you to find a candle and matches/lighter for use in the service.

Welcome

Opening

Tonight we gather
with friends and with strangers.

We come as we are to God.

Tonight we gather
with hopes and with grief.

We come as we are to God.

Tonight we gather
with questions and with dreams.

We come as we are to God.

Tonight we come as we are to God.
And God has promised to meet us here.

Hymn: "O come, O come Emmanuel (st. 1,2,6,7)"

1 O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go.

Refrain

Veni Veni Emmanuel

6 O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light.
Refrain

7 O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of Peace.
Refrain

Opening Prayer

God of love,
today we share with you our feelings and our thoughts,
at a time when our sense of loss is strong.
We recognize that this season will not be the same
as it has been in years past,
because of the losses we have experienced.
As we admit this to you today,
we bring to you our grief and hurt,
and ask that you make your presence felt as you accompany us.

Readings

Psalm 107

Some people wandered in the desert, where there were no roads,
and could not find their way
to a city to live in.
They were hungry and thirsty; they had given up hope.
In the midst of their trouble they cried out to God.

John 11

Mary came to where Jesus was and she said to him:
'Jesus, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!' Jesus saw her
weeping and he saw how the people with her were also weeping, and he was
deeply moved.
'Where have you buried him?' Jesus asked them.
'Come and see,' they answered.
Jesus wept.
'See how much he loved him,' the people said.

Matthew 11

Jesus said, 'Come to me all of you who are tired of carrying heavy loads, and I
will give you rest.'

A Litany of Losses

Pause for silence while we name our losses before God

God of power and God of gentleness, God who welcomes the weary, God who
blesses the brokenhearted and the mourning, we gather tonight, our hearts
heavy with the losses that have accumulated over this past year. As we look
back and remember, be with us in our lament.

Grief over wounds in our society

We mourn this night the brokenness of our society.

We mourn the legacy of hatred, oppression, and distrust that haunts this nation.

We mourn the pandemic of racism that unravels the fabric of our communities.

We mourn our ability to see one another as beings who possess inherent dignity and worth.

We mourn our brokenness.

We mourn our brokenness.

We honor and remember the work of prophets who proclaim justice.

We honor and remember the work of prophets who proclaim justice.

We pray for wisdom and change.

We pray for wisdom and change.

Amen. **Amen.**

Economic and financial loss

We mourn this night the loss of livelihoods.

For so many, the pandemic has taken the security

of food, shelter, care for families, and medical care.

We mourn the loss of businesses that have had to close

and the loss of employment for many.

These jobs offered a sense of identity, provision, security and self-reliance,

some provided opportunities for creativity and growth.

We mourn this loss of livelihood.

We mourn this loss of livelihood.

We honor the dreams now deferred.

We honor the dreams now deferred.

We pray for sustenance and resilience.

We pray for sustenance and resilience.

Amen. **Amen.**

The loss of life

We mourn this night, those who have died.

We mourn the loss of those beloved to us.

And we mourn the loss, in many cases,

of our ability to be with our loved ones as they died,

and we mourn that we were unable to gather with our families and friends for comfort in the ways we need so much.

Silence

Time for Sharing Our Remembrances

While we sing the next piece, if you have a candle near you, take a moment to light it as we remember our loved ones. The officiant will invite you, if you feel comfortable doing so, to share the losses you are remembering today.

Music: De noche iremos

Taize

De noche iremos, de noche

Que para encontrar la fuente

Sólo la sed nos alumbra

Sólo la sed nos alumbra. (x2)

*Translation: By night we hasten in darkness,
to search for living water,
Only our thirst leads us onwards,
Only our thirst leads us onwards.*

We have lit these candles in memory of our losses.
We remember and acknowledge the sorrow that brings us here.
We remember those we have loved,
We remember all we have lost.
We remember in grief and in hope.

In this time of global pandemic, we mourn those who died,
and those who perished while working to save other lives.
Silence

We pray for comfort and peace.
We pray for comfort and peace.
Amen. **Amen.**

Music: "Sanctuary"

Ana Hernandez and Fran McKendree

Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow

Thou art with me.

Though my heart's been torn

On fields of battle

Thou art with me.

Though my trust is gone

And my faith not near

In the sanctuary

Thou art with me

Desolations fire

And fears start thundering

Thou art with me

Through the sea of desires

That drag me under

Thou art with me

Though I've been traded in

Like a souvenir

In the sanctuary

Thou art with me

Through the doubter's gloom

And the cynic's sneer

In the crowded rooms of a mind unclear

Thou art with me

Though I walk for a while down a trail of tears

In the sanctuary thou art with me.

Readings

Psalm 23 *said in unison*

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;

thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

thou anointest my head with oil;

my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Revelation 21:1-2a, 3-5

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.”

And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.”

The Christ Candle

We now light the Christ candle, a symbol of peace to all on earth;
and we remember all who yearn for a word from God,
all who gaze into the night sky in longing and in hope,
all who listen for an angel song.

As we light this candle we remember
the promise of hope that the Messiah would bring
and we pray that this light would also kindle
a flame of hope within our own hearts.

Lighting the Candle of Compassion and Community

We light this candle in honor of the love and support
that we have received from family and friends
who have walked with us through the dark valleys in our lives.

We remember their friendly faces, their warm embraces
and the empathy of their presence and we thank you, Holy God,
knowing that their love and support
is also an expression of your love for us.

As we light this candle
we remember the compassion and the gift of those who have walked with us.

The Candle of Wisdom:

We light this candle as a prayer for wisdom.

We know that we cannot change what has befallen,
but we can pray for the wisdom of acceptance and the grace
that would enable us to move forward.

And though in our hearts we may rage against our loss and our pain,
the reality is that we must accept it for healing to begin.

As we light this candle

we pray for wisdom that will lead to the peace that passes understanding.

The Candle of Faith:

We light this candle as a symbol of our faith.
Even though we walk through the dark valleys,
we know, we trust, we believe that God walks with us.
And so we light this candle to proclaim our faith
and as a reminder of the hope, peace and love
that God promises to each and every one of us.
As we light this candle we remember God's unending love for us all.

Music: "Sending You Light"

Ana Hernandez and Fran McKendree

*I am sending you light,
To heal you, to hold you,
I am sending you light,
To hold you in love. (repeat)*

Prayer

Gracious God, we remember our pain
and we remember our sorrow.
We have lit these candles in memory,
in honour and in hope.
God of all compassion,
we pray that your Spirit would uphold us.
When we wander through the deep darkness,
help us to see the light of your love,
give us a sense of your presence
that we might know that you are with us,
just as you have promised to be.
Lift us above our present sorrow
into the peace of your presence.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer *said in unison*
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.

Blessing and Sending Forth

We return to the world from which we came:
a world that needs to hear God's words of hope, of peace and of love.
We pray that God, who leads by a Star,
will bring us to the place where the Hope of the World is born,
where the Light of the nations shines bright
and where the Prince of Peace will come to reign.
May God bless us and heal us
and hold us in love today, tonight
and for evermore. Amen.

Postlude: "Hymn to the Eternal Flame"

Stephen Paulus

*Every face is in you, every voice,
Every sorrow in you.
Every pity, every love,
Every memory, woven into fire.
Every breath is in you, every cry,
Every longing in you.
Every singing, every hope,
Every healing, woven into fire.
Every heart is in you,
Every tongue, every trembling in you,
Every blessing, every soul,
Every shining, woven into fire.*

*Thank you for joining us tonight. Please know that St. George's is available to walk with you on your grief journey with our pastoral care ministries. Please get in touch with us if you need support.
May God be with you now and always.*

Pastoral Care at St. George's is a ministry of the clergy and the laity. By walking with each other through times of joy and times of sorrow, we show the love of Christ to all.

If you need support or encouragement, please consider reaching out to one of our pastoral care ministries listed below.

Stephen Ministry

Ministers are trained caregivers who provide confidential care to people in need of spiritual support through Christ's love. Ministers meet regularly with their care receivers and pray for them. They provide non-judgmental listening. To request the companionship of a Stephen minister, please contact clergy.

Personal Prayer Ministry

Personal prayer ministers respond to the needs of parishioners who request prayer by listening and providing intercessory prayer, mostly during services. During the pandemic, personal prayer ministers are available to pray with you by phone or pray for you based on [prayer requests received online](#).

Prayer Group

The prayer group prays for those on our prayer lists and any other requests received. To be added to the prayer list, please contact the office or clergy.

Prayer Shawl and Quilt Ministries

These ministry teams provide hand-made knitted prayer shawls or quilts to support members dealing with trying and significant life events. Shawls and quilts are mantles of healing and comfort and prayers are said for the recipient in the making of the shawl or quilt. To receive a prayer shawl or quilt, please contact the office or clergy.

One Body Response Team (OBRT)

The members of this team care for those in our community by providing home visits, meals, phone calls, cards and offering transportation needs. During the pandemic, this ministry team offers connection through phone calls and cards. To sign up as a recipient of OBRT, please contact the office or clergy.

Drop-in Grief Support Group (Trinity Episcopal)

For those facing various types of grief, this monthly meeting provides an opportunity for coming together to share experiences and learn about ways to deal with grief. To learn more about it, please contact [Randall Clingenpeel](#).

Upcoming Fellowship and Formation Events

For details on these events and more visit stgeorgesepiscopal.net

Sunday Adult Forums

10 am on Zoom. Join us for an engaging, interactive, and varied sequence of programs in the coming months. Topics include: Bible Challenge (e.g. versions of the Bible, trauma in the Bible, the Deuterocanonical texts); and more.

Episco 101

This course is designed for adults who are new to St. George's or the Episcopal church and for those interested in baptism, confirmation, or being received into the church from another denomination. Everyone is welcome! We will meet online every Sunday in Lent, beginning Feb 21. Contact [Jan Meredith](#) to register.

Lenten Weekend

February 27 - 28, 2021

Explore the power of storytelling to heal, unpack our identities, nurture our faith and so much more with two members of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE). We will have the opportunity to imaginatively immerse ourselves in the stories of scripture, in the story of this monastic order, our story as a community celebrating its 300th anniversary, and our individual stories. If you'd like to help with planning the weekend, please contact [Rev. Areeta](#).

Office Note

Our office closes at 12 pm on December 24 and will reopen on December 30. We will be closed December 31, and reopen on January 4. If you have a pastoral emergency and need to speak with clergy, please call or text 540.361.8573.

300th Anniversary History Events

We are planning some webinar online events featuring our own St. George's history committee and National Parks historian, John Hennesey, examining the history of the region and our parish. Watch our website and e-newsletter for details.

Celebrate Epiphany at Home

This year, we'll be celebrating the Feast of Epiphany, January 6, by learning about an old Christian tradition. At the beginning of the year, during Epiphany, it is traditional to bless the home with chalk that has been blessed. Bundles with chalk will be available at the graveyard gate beginning the afternoon of January 3 and all throughout the week. Keep an eye out for a message from Fr. David Casey and chalk artwork from a local artist and St. Georgian!

Upcoming Fellowship and Formation Events

For details on these events and more visit stgeorgesepiscopal.net

Upcoming Feasts

Christmastide is a busy season for feasts of the Church, and ones that are new to many of us! Keep the Christmas cheer going with noon prayer on Facebook Live on December 26, 28, 29, and January 1, the feasts of St. Stephen, St. John the Evangelist, Holy Innocents, and the Holy Name. Join us in learning about these forgotten feasts and celebrating the powerful witnesses to Jesus' love in our tradition.

Twelve Nights of Christmas Prayers

We invite you to connect in a community of prayer, December 25 through January 5. We will gather from 8 - 8:30 pm by phone to share in seasonal reflection, meditation, and prayer led by St. Georgians. Celebrating the birth of Christ in an especially challenging time, we pray for the needs of the world and seek grace together. To access the call: dial 301.715.8592. When prompted, enter the Meeting ID: 838 7199 7224. Then when prompted, enter the passcode: 093396. To mute and unmute yourself, press *6.

NYE Haiti Benefit Concert

Our annual Haiti Benefit Concert has been postponed to late February. This year's concert will be virtual and will include performances by many of our musicians, including organists, jazz ensemble, choirs and more. Stay tuned for details.

Virtual Music Offerings

Our musicians worked hard preparing for our and recording our Christmas services. We've learned a lot about the process, and want to share more music with the St. George's community. Look for additional videos of our musicians in the months ahead.

Youth and Children's Formation and Fellowship

Due to the pandemic, we have moved our children and youth formation to an online format.

Children's Formation

Videos available on Sundays at 8 am, YouTube channel; Resumes Jan. 10
Our children's formation is from pre-K3 to 5th grade. Grounded in Montessori principles, the children are invited to come to a space of order, simplicity, prayer and community, where we learn about our story as the people of God. Currently, we are offering [weekly pre-recorded formational videos](#) for families to enjoy together.

Youth Group

Sundays at 5pm, Zoom;
Resumes Jan. 10.
Our youth group meets on Sundays from 5 - 7 pm (September through May). We gather for conversations about faith and issues affecting our lives, we get involved with our community, and we have fun hanging out with friends.

Mission Trip

St. George's rising 8th graders - 12th graders go on a yearly mission trip during the summer. This year, we will be going on a local mission trip that does not require overnight stay. More details to come. If you are interested or have any questions please contact [Hecti Musa](#).

Volunteers Needed

If you would like to volunteer with our children's and youth ministry, please contact Hecti Musa: 540.373.4133 or hecti.musa@stgeorgesepiscopal.net.

Youth Formation Sundays, 5 pm via Zoom - Resumes Jan. 10

Please contact [Hecti Musa](#) to sign up for our 2021 programs below.

Rite 13

Sundays, Feb 14 - March 21, Zoom, time TBC

Our Rite 13 class is for all youth who have recently turned 13 or will be turning 13 by the end of May 2021. It is a 6-week class designed to recognize 13 as a significant milestone towards the journey to adulthood.

This class will end with a blessing and celebration of the Rite 13 celebrities!

Confirm Not Conform

Sundays, Jan 10 - March 21, Zoom, time TBC

Youth in 9th grade and upwards are invited to prepare for confirmation. This class provides a safe place for participants to explore the Christian tradition, to ask questions and to discover what they truly believe.

Youth in Global Community

In March, a group of 11th and 12th grade high school girls and their moms usually travel to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in NYC. Although this year we will not attend in person, we are meeting on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month online to learn about the issues that confront women and girls worldwide and our response as people of faith. Contact [Sheryl Stroud Bryant](#) for more information.

Contact Staff

**For pastoral emergencies:
540.361.8573**

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Vestry

If you have questions or concerns,
please reach out to our Vestry
(elected lay leaders).

Sheryl Stroud Bryant, 2020
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300th Anniversary
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Stuart Whitford, 2022
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Serving This Sunday

Thank you to our worship leaders
serving today. If you would like to
volunteer, contact the church office:
office@stgeorgesepiscopal.net.

Clergy:

The Rev. Joseph H. Hensley, Jr.
The Rev. Areeta D. Bridgemohan
The Rev. William S. Dickinson

Preacher:

The Rev. Areeta D. Bridgemohan

Lector:

Mike Fray
Vicki Lewis
Randall Clingenpeel

ASL Interpreter:

Beth Klein

Music:

Achim Loch
Laurel E. Loch

Zoom Host:

Amy Bogardus

St. George's Episcopal Church

The Rev. Joseph H. Hensley, Jr., Rector
The Rev. Areeta D. Bridgemohan,
Associate Rector
The Rev. Will Dickinson,
Curate

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