

# St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

*Easter Season*

*Saint Stephen's welcomes everyone who wishes to follow Christ, worship together, grow in faith and share God's love through service to others.*

## FEAST OF CATHERINE OF SIENA

9:30 am Wednesday, 30 April 2025

From [Lessor Feasts & Fasts](#)



Catherine Benincasa was the youngest of twenty-five children of a dyer of Siena. At six years of age, she had a remarkable vision that decided her life's vocation. Walking home from a visit, she stopped on the road and gazed upward, oblivious to everything around her. "I beheld our Lord seated in glory with St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John." She went on to say later that the Savior smiled on her and blessed her.

From then on, Catherine spent most of her time in prayer and meditation, despite her mother's attempts to force her to be like other girls. To settle matters, Catherine cut off her hair, her chief beauty. Her family harassed her continually; but in the end, convinced that she was deaf to all opposition, her father let her do as she wished: close herself away in a darkened room, fast, and sleep on boards. Eventually, she was accepted as a third order Dominican postulant. Catherine had numerous visions, and was also tried most severely by temptations.

[Continued Pg 11](#)

## **SALUTATION:**

**Presider:** Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**People:** **The Lord is risen, indeed! Alleluia!**

**Presider:** Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify you Holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**GLORIA —**

**#S-278**

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

## **COLLECT OF THE DAY:**

**Presider:** The Lord be with you

**People:** And also with you.

**Presider:** Let us pray

**All:** Almighty and everlasting God, who kindled the flame of your love in the heart of your servant Catherine of Siena: Grant unto us the same strength of conviction and power of love that, as we rejoice in her triumph, we may profit by her example; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **LITURGY OF THE WORD:** *(Please be seated for the lessons)*

### **First Lesson: A Reading from the Book of Lamentations (3:31-36):**

The Lord will not reject forever. Although he causes grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone. When all the prisoners of the land are crushed under foot, when human rights are perverted in the presence of the Most High, when one's case is subverted—does the Lord not see it?

**Reader** The Word of the Lord

**People** Thanks be to God

### **The PSALM:**

**Psalm 36 (read in unison)**

- 1** There is a voice of rebellion deep in the heart of the wicked; \*  
There is no fear of God before his eyes.
- 2** He flatters himself in his own eyes \*  
that his hateful sin will not be found out.
- 3** The words of his mouth are wicked and deceitful, \*  
he has left off acting wisely and doing good.
- 4** He thinks up wickedness upon his bed  
and has set himself in no good way; \*  
he does not abhor that which is evil.
- 5** Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, \*  
and your faithfulness to the clouds.

- 6 Your righteousness is like the strong mountains,  
your justice like the great deep; \*  
you save both man and beast, O Lord.
- 7 How priceless is your love, O God! \*  
your people take refuge under the shadow of your wings.
- 8 They feast upon the abundance of your house; \*  
you give them drink from the river of your delights.
- 9 For with you is the well of life, \*  
and in your light we see light.
- 10 Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you, \*  
and your favor to those who are true of heart.
- 11 Let not the foot of the proud come near me, \*  
nor the hand of the wicked push me aside.
- 12 See how they are fallen, those who work wickedness! \*  
they are cast down and shall not be able to rise.

**Gospel Lesson:** *(Please stand as you are able)*

Deacon: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to  
**Luke (12:22-31):**

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

Jesus said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.”

Deacon: The Gospel of the Lord

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

## HOMILY

**Nicene Creed:** *Traditional Version (Said aloud by all, in unison)*

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.**

**Amen.**

## **Prayers of the People**

Leader: Christ our life, You are alive - in the beauty of the earth:

**People: in the rhythm of the seasons, in the mystery of time and space,  
Alleluia**

Leader: Christ our life, You are alive - in the tenderness of touch

**People: in the heartbeat of intimacy, in the insights of solitude, Alleluia**

Leader: Christ our life, You are alive - in the creative possibility

**People: of the hardest conversation, of the dreariest task, of the most  
threatening event, Alleluia**

Leader: Christ our life, You are alive - to offer re-creation

**People: to every unhealed hurt, to every deadened place, to every damaged  
Heart, Alleluia.**

Leader: Christ our life, You are alive – to give us encouragement

**People: to face our fears, to wrestle with our doubts, to overcome our  
disappointments, Alleluia.**

Leader: You set before us a great choice, death in our souls without you or Life  
abundantly and eternally with you.

**People: Therefore, we choose life.**

Leader: The dance of resurrection soars and surges through the whole creation,

**People: This is your grace through which we live. So let us live fully and  
thankfully. Alleluia.**

## **The Peace:**

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**People And also with you**

## **The Offertory:**

Presider Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself as an offering and  
sacrifice to God.

Doxology #380 vs. 3

**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 Holy Communion -** *The Great Thanksgiving BCP Rite 2A*

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 our God

**People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

*Presider:*

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

But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Pascal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has won for us everlasting life.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus -

#S-128

***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.***

*Presider continues:*

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.**

Presider: As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,

**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 *(Presider breaks the consecrated bread)*

Fraction Anthem : Hymnal 1982 #S-155

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Christ our Pass - o - ver is

sac - ri - ficed for us; there - fore let us keep the feast.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

### Invitation to Communion:

Presider: The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died and rose again for you and feed on him in your hearts by faith and with thanksgiving.

*(All are invited and welcome to come forward and receive communion in this church. The bread is gluten free and we use real wine. To receive by intincting/dipping your bread into the wine, please use the left altar rail. To receive by eating the bread and taking a sip of wine from the cup, please use the right altar rail. You may receive only the bread if you prefer. If you are not ready to take communion with us today, you may also come forward, cross your arms over your chest and receive a blessing instead.)*

## **Post Communion Prayer**    (*The people stand as they are able.*)

Presider: Let us pray.

**All:**    **Almighty and ever-living God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom.**

**And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever.    Amen.**

## **Blessing**

Presider: May Almighty God, who has redeemed us and made us his children through the resurrection of his Son our Lord, bestow upon you the riches of his blessing, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.    **Amen.**

## **Dismissal**

Deacon: People of St. Stephen's, what does God call us to do?

**People:**    **We are called to love and serve.**

Deacon: Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in God's Spirit.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

**People:**    **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia, (*Alleluia!*)**

Continued from front:

Frequently, she felt totally abandoned by God. At last, in 1366, the Savior appeared with Mary and the Heavenly Host, and espoused her to himself, thus ending her years of lonely prayer and struggle. She became a nurse, as Dominican tertiaries regularly did, caring for patients with leprosy and cancer, whom other nurses disliked to treat.

Opinion in Siena was sharply divided about whether she was a saint or a fanatic, but when the Bishop of Capua was appointed as her confessor, he helped her to win full support from the Dominican Mother House. Catherine was a courageous worker in a time of severe plague. She visited prisoners condemned to death, and she was constantly called upon to arbitrate feuds and to prepare troubled sinners for confession. During the great schism of the papacy, with rival popes in Rome and Avignon, Catherine wrote tirelessly to princes, kings, and popes, urging them to restore the unity of the church. She even went to Rome to press further for the cause.

Besides her many letters to all manner of people, Catherine wrote a Dialogue, a mystical work dictated in ecstasy. Exhausted and paralyzed, she died at the age of thirty-three.

More from [Wikipedia the free encyclopedia](#)

**[Caterina di Jacopo di Benincasa](#)** (25 March

1347 – 29 April 1380), known as **Catherine of Siena**, was an Italian mystic and pious laywoman who engaged in papal and Italian politics through extensive letter-writing and advocacy.

Canonized in 1461, she is revered as a saint and as a [Doctor of the Church](#) due to her extensive theological authorship. She is also considered to have influenced [Italian literature](#).

Born and raised in [Siena](#), Catherine wanted from an early age to devote herself to God, against the will of her parents. She joined the "[mantellates](#)", a group of pious women, primarily widows, informally devoted to Dominican spirituality; later these types of urban pious groups would be formalized as the Third Order of the Dominicans, but not until after Catherine's death.<sup>[3]</sup> Her influence with [Pope Gregory XI](#) played a role in his 1376 decision to leave [Avignon](#) for [Rome](#). The Pope then sent Catherine to [negotiate peace](#) with the [Florentine Republic](#). After Gregory XI's death (March 1378) and the conclusion of peace (July 1378), she returned to Siena. She dictated to secretaries her set of spiritual treatises, *The Dialogue of Divine Providence*. The [Great Schism of the West](#) led Catherine of Siena to go to Rome with the pope. She sent numerous letters to princes and cardinals to promote obedience to [Pope Urban VI](#) and to defend what she calls the "vessel of the Church". She died on 29 April 1380, exhausted by her rigorous fasting. Urban VI celebrated her funeral and burial in the [Basilica of Santa Maria sopra Minerva](#) in Rome.

Devotion around Catherine of Siena developed rapidly after her death. [Pope Pius II](#) canonized her in 1461; she was declared a [patron saint](#) of Rome in 1866 by [Pope Pius IX](#), and of [Italy](#) (together with [Francis of Assisi](#)) in 1939 by [Pope Pius XII](#).<sup>[4][5][6][7][8]</sup> She was the second woman to be declared a [Doctor of the Church](#), on 4 October 1970 by [Pope Paul VI](#) – only days after [Teresa of Ávila](#). In 1999 [Pope John Paul II](#) proclaimed her a [Patron Saint of Europe](#).

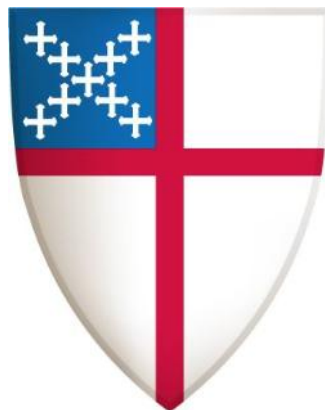
Catherine of Siena is one of the outstanding figures of medieval Catholicism due to the strong influence she had in the history of the papacy and her extensive authorship.<sup>[9]</sup> She was behind the return of the Pope from Avignon to Rome, and then carried out many missions entrusted to her by the pope, something quite rare for a woman in the [Middle Ages](#). Her *Dialogue*, hundreds of letters, and dozens of prayers also give her a prominent place in the history of Italian literature.

[Continued online](#)

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2750 Cardinal Dr. Sierra Vista, AZ 85635  
<https://ststephensaz.org>  
520-458-4432



## ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**Rector:** Allison Cornell  
Off. Phone: 520-458-4432  
Mobile: 562-743-3784  
[RevAllison@ststephensaz.org](mailto:RevAllison@ststephensaz.org)  
**Parish Administrator**  
Mark Sowards  
Off. Phone 520-458-4432  
Mobile: 408-892-1062  
[mark.sowards@ststephensaz.org](mailto:mark.sowards@ststephensaz.org)  
Office Fax: 520-458-8237  
**Rev. Deacons:**  
Dorothy Gutwein

Hm: 520-515-9183  
[dottie85635@gmail.com](mailto:dottie85635@gmail.com)  
Sherry Simon  
[sherrytsimon@gmail.com](mailto:sherrytsimon@gmail.com)  
(520)-210-2026  
**Church Accompanist :**  
Doreen Oberg  
[doreenoberg@hotmail.com](mailto:doreenoberg@hotmail.com)  
**Vestry Staff**  
**Senior Warden:**  
Jeff Speer  
[jeffrey5454speer@gmail.com](mailto:jeffrey5454speer@gmail.com)  
Cell:(520) 678-5688

Please leave voicemail message  
**Junior wardens:**  
Pete Criscuolo  
[petesacct2014@gmail.com](mailto:petesacct2014@gmail.com)  
Cell: 520-234-7687  
& Timothy Holsonback  
[holsonback@cox.net](mailto:holsonback@cox.net)  
520/459-1937  
**Treasurer:**  
Anne Roth  
Cell:303/917-8151  
[avd.roth@comcast.net](mailto:avd.roth@comcast.net)

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