

**DECEMBER 26,
SAINT STEPHEN, DEACON AND MARTYR:
MORNING PRAYER**

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

**A Reading from the
Second Book of the Chronicles**

Now after the death of Jehoi'ada the princes of Judah came and did obeisance to the king; then the king hearkened to them. And they forsook the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Ashe'rim and the idols. And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their guilt. Yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the LORD; these testified against them, but they would not give heed. Then the Spirit of God took possession of Zechari'ah the son of Jehoi'ada the priest; and he stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you.'" But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. Thus Jo'ash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoi'ada, Zechari'ah's father, had

shown him, but killed his son. And when he was dying, he said, “May the LORD see and avenge!”
The Reader concludes The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” And what they said pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Proch'orus, and Nica'nor, and Ti'mon, and Par'menas, and Nicola'us, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the

disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

The Reader concludes The Word of the Lord.