



ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

All Are Welcome!

The Fifth Sunday After Pentecost

June 28, 2026, 8:00 and 10:30 am Worship Services



The Mission of the Apostles

WELCOME TO ST. STEPHEN'S!

It is a joy to have you worship with us today. We believe everyone who worships with us is sent to us by God. So, welcome.

As we gather for worship, we want to remind everyone of a few important items:

- Please turn off or silence your electronic devices.
- We strongly encourage you to enter the sanctuary in silence as you prepare for worship.
- Before worship begins, we encourage you to speak to God. During worship, be ready for God to speak to you.
- After worship, we invite you to fellowship with one another, especially those God has brought to us — our visitors.

WHY ARE YOU HERE?

As you come in and settle into your seat, I invite you to think about the following:

- ❖ Wherever we go, we have a reason for going there. What is your reason for being here today?
- ❖ God is merciful and kind to us each and every day. What thanksgiving do you bring to God today?
- ❖ Because each day brings many challenges, what concern(s) do you bring to God today?
- ❖ As your Rector, I have come with thanksgiving for God's grace and mercy and to worship Him; because today is a reminder to me that another week has ended and a new week has begun. It is my hope that you have come to do the same. I encourage you to join me as we call upon our God and worship Him.

Canon Wilmot—a son of God

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

The Flag for June is raised by *Bill & Kathy Finch*,

In loving memory of Bill's daughter, Airman First Class *Tereasa Marie Finch*.
Tereasa served in the USAF from 1986 until 1989 as a Chapel Management Specialist (an Assistant to the Chaplain) with assignments at the Naval Air Station in Sigonella, Sicily in Italy and Eglin AFB in Florida.

✝ *This symbol represents the point at which we sign ourselves with the sign of the cross during worship.*

Prelude ***Largo, "New World Symphony"*** A. Dvorák

The Word of God

Please stand.

Opening Hymn ***O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*** Hymnal 493

O for a thousand tongues to sing my dear Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of his grace!

My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim
and spread through all the earth abroad the honors of thy Name.

Jesus! the Name that charms our fears and bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears, 'tis life and health and peace.

He speaks; and, listening to his voice, new life the dead receive,
the mournful broken hearts rejoice, the humble poor believe.

Hear him, ye deaf; ye voiceless ones, your loosened tongues employ;
ye blind, behold, your Savior comes; and leap, ye lame, for joy!

Glory to God and praise and love be now and ever given
by saints below and saints above, the Church in earth and heaven.

The People standing, the Celebrant says:

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

People *And blessed be his Kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.*

The Celebrant and People say

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 your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song of Praise, all standing

To God Be the Glory

M98

To God be the glory, great things He hath done!
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory, great things He hath done!*

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son,
But purer and higher and greater will be
Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.

Refrain

The Collect for The Fifth Sunday After Pentecost

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People ***And also with you.***

Celebrant Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

People ***Amen.***

Please be seated

The Lessons

May we hear the Word of God through these words.

A Reading from the Book of Genesis 22:1–14

God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.” So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.” Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Abraham said, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

The Word of the Lord

People ***Thanks be to God.***

Psalm 13

To be read responsively by the Lay Reader and Congregation.

- L How long, O LORD?
 will you forget me for ever? *
 how long will you hide your face from me?
- C How long shall I have perplexity in my mind,
 and grief in my heart, day after day? *
 how long shall my enemy triumph over me?**
- L Look upon me and answer me, O LORD my God; *
 give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death;
- C Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him," *
 and my foes rejoice that I have fallen.**
- L But I put my trust in your mercy; *
 my heart is joyful because of your saving help.

**C I will sing to the LORD, for he has dealt with me richly; *
I will praise the Name of the Lord Most High.**

Celebrant and People

**Glory to the † Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

May we hear the Word of God through these words.

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans 6:12–23

Do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord

People Thanks be to God.

Please stand.

Gradual Hymn ***Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life*** H 609

Where cross the crowded ways of life,
where sound the cries of race and clan,
above the noise of selfish strife,
we hear thy voice, O Son of Man.

The cup of water given for thee
still holds the freshness of thy grace;
yet long these multitudes to see
the true compassion of thy face.

Please remain standing for the Gospel.

When the Gospel is being announced, a cross is made,

✝ (on the forehead) in my mind to understand it,

✝ (on the lips) on my lips to proclaim it, and

✝ (over the heart) in my heart to live it.

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew 10: 40—42
People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

The Gospel of the Lord
People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

O Master, from the mountain side,
make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
among these restless throngs abide,
O tread the city's streets again;

till all the world shall learn thy love,
and follow where thy feet have trod;
till glorious from thy heaven above,
shall come the city of our God.

Please be seated.

❖ Sermon

Wilmot T. Merchant II ❖

Please use this time to silently reflect on what the Lord has spoken to you.

Please stand.

The Nicene Creed

BCP 358

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and 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

(We bow for the two lines in bold.)

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.

Please sit or kneel for The Prayers of the People.

The Prayers of the People

BCP 387

The Prayer Leader and People pray responsively.

Leader The Lord be with you.

People *And also with you.*

Leader Let us pray.

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic and Apostolic Church;

People *That we all may be one.*

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

People *That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

We pray for Sarah, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Sean our Presiding Bishop, Ruth our Bishop, Bishop-elect Wilmot our priest, Sarah our Supply Priest, and for all bishops and other ministers;

People *That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.*

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world, for Donald our President, Henry our Governor, and Jay our Mayor;

People *That there may be justice and peace on the earth.*

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

People *That our works may find favor in your sight.*

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

People *That they may be delivered from their distress.*

Give to the departed eternal rest;

People *Let light perpetual shine upon them.*

We praise you for your saints, blessed Stephen, and all the saints who have entered into joy;

People *May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.*

Let us pray for our own needs and those of our loved ones and others, for the men and women who are serving in the armed forces, and all others who serve to preserve and protect lives, and those who have asked us to remember them in our prayers, especially our families, friends, and loved ones.

Lord in your mercy

People *Hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for the people in disaster and troubled areas and those affected by acts of violence here at home and all around the world. Let us also pray for the many volunteers who are working to assist our brothers and sisters in those areas that have been devastated either by man-made or natural disaster.

Lord, in your mercy.

People Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for God's people throughout the world, especially the Anglican Communion, The Episcopal Church, and The Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina. Today we are praying for: The Executive Council of The Episcopal Church, and *The Anglican Church of Southern Africa*.

Lord, in your mercy.

People Hear our prayer.

**Additional Prayers*

LET US GIVE THANKS FOR OUR VISITORS.

LET US PRAY FOR TRAVELERS THIS WEEK.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO: Robert Dunn (6/28), Stacey Shorts (6/28), Christopher Caldwell (6/29), Carole Hunter (7/2).

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO: Harry & Amy Austin (6/29), Bruce & Donna Wilt (6/29), Kathy & George Ingalls (7/4).

LET US PRAY FOR OUR PARISH FAMILY.

INTERCESSORY AND THANKSGIVING PRAYER. As we continue to hold one another up in prayer in this parish, this week we are praying for: **Holly & Bob Ayer, James, Mark, Luke, and Ashley, Dory Babi, Judy Bailey, Becky & Michael Baker, Nancy & Terry Barbee, Nina Barnes, Pete & Betsy Barr, Jerry Bart, Charlie Benson, Chris & Ellen Benson.**

Celebrant and People

Gracious and most loving God, we join them in committing to you whatever concerns they may have, asking you to let your will be done for them. We also join them in giving you thanks, for your many blessings bestowed upon them and their loved ones. We praise you and thank you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Confession of Sin

Celebrant Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Celebrant and people

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

The Celebrant stands and says

Almighty God have mercy † on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

***People* Amen.**

Please stand.

The Peace

Jesus said, *Peace I leave with you; my Peace I give to you . . .*

John 14:27

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

***People* And also with you.**

At the conclusion of the peace the Celebrant says

Celebrant God is Good!

***People* All the Time!**



Please be seated.

The Holy Communion

Offertory	8:00	<i>How Can I Keep from Singing</i>	R. Lowry
	10:30	<i>How Beautiful</i>	T. Paris
		Kate Freimayer & Ariel Roebuck ~ duet	

Doxology—to be sung

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
praise Him, all creatures here below;
O Praise Him! Alleluia!**
**Praise Him above, ye heavenly host:
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
O Praise Him! O Praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen**

The Great Thanksgiving and Sanctus Eucharistic Prayer A

BCP 367

Please remain standing, as you are able.

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People ***And also with you.***

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.
People ***We lift them to the Lord.***

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People ***It is right to give him thanks and praise.***

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and every-where to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. In fulfillment of his true promise, the Holy Spirit came down from heaven, lighting upon the disciples to teach them and to lead them into all truth; uniting peoples of many tongues in the confession of one faith, and giving to your Church the power to serve you as a royal priesthood, and to preach the Gospel to all nations.

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

Celebrant and People
Bow during the underlined text

S129

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.

Please sit, kneel or remain standing.

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:

Celebrant and People

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

The Celebrant continues

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.

People* *Amen.

And now, let us sing in thanksgiving the prayer our Savior Christ taught us,

Celebrant and People

**Our Father, which 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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever. *Amen.***



The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant and People ~ to be sung

S154

**Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-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.**

The Celebrant says the following Invitation

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts by faith,
with thanksgiving.

*This is the Lord's table, not of the church, but of the Lord.
It is made ready for those who love Him
and for those who want to love Him more.
So come, you who have much faith and you who have little;
You who have been here often and you who have not been here long;
You who have tried to follow and you who have failed;
Come, because it is the Lord who invites you.
It is His will that those who want Him should meet Him here.*

Please join in singing our Communion Hymns.

Break Thou the Bread of Life

LEVAS 146

Break thou the bread of life,
Dear Lord, to me,
As thou didst break the loaves
Beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page
I seek thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for thee,
O living word!

Bless thou the truth, dear Lord,
To me, to me,
As thou didst bless the bread
By Galilee;
Then shall all bondage cease,
All fetters fall,
And I shall find my peace,
My all in all.

Teach me to live, dear Lord,
Only for thee,
As thy disciples lived
in Galilee;
Then, all my struggles o'er,
Then, vict'ry won,
I shall behold thee, Lord,
The living one.

Hear My Prayer

Taizé

O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer, when I call, answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer, come and listen to me.

The Lord is my song,
the Lord is my song, all my hope comes from God.
The Lord is my song, the Lord is my song,
God, the well-spring of life.

Celebrant The Lord be with you
People And also with you.
Celebrant Let us Pray

After Communion, the Celebrant says: Let us pray.

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Celebrant gives the blessing

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and your loved ones far and near, and remain with all of you for ever.

People Amen.

Benediction *To be sung—please stand.*

God be with you till we meet again;

By His counsels guide, uphold you,

With His sheep securely fold you,

God be with you till we meet again.



The Church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ her Lord;
she is his new creation
by water and the word:
from heaven he came and sought her
to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her,
and for her life he died.

Elect from every nation,
yet one o'er all the earth,
her charter of salvation,
one Lord, one faith, one birth;
one holy Name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with every grace endued.

Mid toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war
she waits the consummation
of peace for evermore;
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blessed,
and the great Church victorious
shall be the Church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union
with God, the Three in One,
and mystic sweet communion
with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we
like them, the meek and lowly,
on high may dwell with thee.

The Celebrant dismisses the people.

Celebrant We are called to be one with God and each other in Christ.

People ***By living the Gospel with love and compassion.***

Celebrant Alleluia. Alleluia. Let us go in peace to love and serve God and one another.

People ***Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.***

Postlude

“Aurelia”

D. Cherwien

THE WORSHIP HAS ENDED. LET THE SERVICE BEGIN.

“... what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

God is good! All the time!

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Our Mission

is to be one with God and
humanity in Christ
by living the Gospel
with love and compassion.



Our Vision

is to become comfortable
with Jesus Christ
and boldly proclaim Him.



PARTICIPANTS IN THE CELEBRATION AT ST. STEPHEN'S

Ministers: The Congregants of St. Stephen's, Family, Friends and Visitors
Celebrant: The Very Rev. Canon Dr. Wilmot T. Merchant II
Dir of Music: Roberta Rowland-Raybold, c.a.g.o.
Vergar: Robert Dunn

MINISTERS AND LAYLEADERS

The Most Rev. Sean Rowe, Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church
The Right Rev. Ruth Woodliff-Stanley, Bishop, The Diocese of SC
The Very Rev. Canon Dr. Wilmot T. Merchant, II, Rector

Vestry Members

❖ Sue Crouch, Senior Warden (2026) ❖ Chris Welborn, Junior Warden (2027)
❖ Robert Dunn (2026) ❖ Wayne Mumford (2026) ❖ Mike Raley (2027)
❖ Tracy Thompson (2027) ❖ Pete Barr (2028) ❖ Dean Graves (2028)
❖ Richard Martin, Jr. (2028).

Associate Vestry Members

❖ Joe Lenhard (2026) ❖ Glenda Scherer (2026) ❖ Bill Simpson, Jr. (2026)

Vestry Officers

❖ Bill Mann, Treasurer ❖ Kathy Finch, Assistant Treasurer
❖ Will Bridges, Parish/Vestry Clerk, Sally Goodson, Assistant Parish/Vestry Clerk

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