



# St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

*All Are Welcome!*

## The Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany

February 8, 2026, 10:00 am Worship Service



Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others,  
so that they may see your good works . . ."

## **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 this morning 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***

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

Prelude      ***Versets from “Heures Mystiques”***      L. Boellmann

Opening Prayer

*Please stand.*

Opening Hymn      ***Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies***      Hymnal 7

Christ, whose glory fills the skies,  
Christ, the true, the only Light,  
Sun of Righteousness, arise!  
Triumph o’er the shades of night:  
Dayspring from on high, be near;  
Daystar, in my heart appear.

Dark and cheerless is the morn  
unaccompanied by thee;  
joyless is the day’s return,  
till thy mercy’s beams I see,  
till they inward light impart,  
glad my eyes, and warm my heart.

Visit then this soul of mine!  
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief!  
Fill me, radiancy divine;  
scatter all my unbelief;  
more and more thyself display,  
shining to the perfect day.

## **The Word of God**

### Opening Acclamation

*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 continue*

**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*

***Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee***

Hymnal 376

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,  
God of glory, Lord of love;  
hearts unfold like flowers before thee,  
praising thee, their sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;  
drive the dark of doubt away;  
giver of immortal gladness,  
fill us with the light of day.

Thou art giving and forgiving,  
ever blessing, ever blest,  
well-spring of the joy of living,  
ocean-depth of happy rest!  
Thou our Father, Christ our Brother:  
all who live in love are thine;  
teach us how to love each other,  
lift us to the joy divine.

## **The Collect for The Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany**

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.

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

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

Set us free, O God, from the bondage of our sins, and give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

***People*** ***Amen.***

*Please be seated.*

## **The Lessons**

May we hear the Word of God through these words.

*A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 58:1—12*

Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,  
to the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet day after day they seek me  
and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness  
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;

they ask of me righteous judgments,  
they delight to draw near to God.

“Why do we fast, but you do not see?  
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,  
and oppress all your workers.

Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight  
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today  
will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose,  
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,  
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,  
a day acceptable to the LORD?

Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;

when you see the naked, to cover them,  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly;

your vindicator shall go before you,  
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;  
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,  
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

if you offer your food to the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,

then your light shall rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be like the noonday.

The LORD will guide you continually,  
and satisfy your needs in parched places,  
and make your bones strong;

and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water,  
whose waters never fail.

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to live in.

The Word of the Lord

**People      Thanks be to God.**

**Psalms 112:1—10** *To be read responsively by the Lay Reader and Congregation.*

- L      Hallelujah!  
Happy are they who fear the Lord \*  
and have great delight in his commandments!
- C      **Their descendants will be mighty in the land; \*  
the generation of the upright will be blessed.**
- L      Wealth and riches will be in their house, \*  
and their righteousness will last for ever.
- C      **Light shines in the darkness for the upright; \*  
the righteous are merciful and full of compassion.**
- L      It is good for them to be generous in lending \*  
and to manage their affairs with justice.
- C      **For they will never be shaken; \*  
the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.**
- L      They will not be afraid of any evil rumors; \*  
their heart is right;  
they put their trust in the Lord.
- C      **Their heart is established and will not shrink, \*  
until they see their desire upon their enemies.**
- L      They have given freely to the poor, \*  
and their righteousness stands fast for ever;  
they will hold up their head with honor.

**C     The wicked will see it and be angry;  
they will gnash their teeth and pine away; \*  
the desires of the wicked will perish.**

*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.**

*Please stand.*

Gradual Hymn                      ***Lead Us, Heavenly Father***                      Hymnal 559

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us  
    o'er the world's tempestuous sea;  
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,  
    for we have no help but thee,  
yet possessing every blessing,  
    if our God our Father be.

Savior, breathe forgiveness o'er us;  
    all our weakness thou dost know;  
thou didst tread this earth before us;  
    thou didst feel its keenest woe;  
yet unfearing, persevering,  
    to thy passion thou didst go.

*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 5:13—12*  
**People      *Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

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

Sermon Hymn

Hymnal 559

Spirit of our God, descending,  
fill our hearts with heavenly joy;  
love with every passion blending,  
pleasure that can never cloy;  
thus provided, pardoned, guided,  
nothing can our peace destroy.

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us  
o’er the world’s tempestuous sea;  
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,  
for we have no help but thee,  
yet possessing every blessing,  
if our God our Father be.

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

## **The Nicene Creed**

**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 following 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**

*The 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.***

For Sarah, The Archbishop of Canterbury, Sean our Presiding Bishop, Ruth our Bishop, Wilmot our 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 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: St. Thomas Episcopal Church, North Charleston, The Rev. Matthew McCormick, Rector, and *Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui*.

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:*** Cathy Arruzzo (2/3), Rosalie Dye (2/3), Judy Mohr (2/5), Terry Barbee (2/8), Sharon Disley (2/10), Bobbie Lybrand (2/10), Hollis Colie (2/11), Jack Early (2/12), Roger Kersey (2/14), Johnnie Springett (2/14).

***HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:*** Iryna & Alex Bobir (2/12), Larry & Rosalie Dye (2/14).

***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: **Blanche & Chris** Welborn, **Patricia** Westerman, **Abe & Austin** White, **Jane & Billy** Willard, **Curry & Beverly** Wilson, **Bruce & Donna** Wilt, **Jean** Worthington, **Catherine** Young, **Rich** Zuzzio & **John** Simpson, **Sandy** Adams.

*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**

*The Celebrant continues*

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Silence is kept.*

*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 sit.*

## **The Holy Communion**

Offertory    ***Light Dawns on a Weary World***    Arr: D. Cherwien

*Please stand.*

*Doxology*

*Old Hundredth*

**From all that dwell below the skies  
let the Creator's praise arise!  
Let the Redeemer's Name be sung  
through every land, by every tongue!**

**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 Great Thanksgiving and Sanctus Eucharistic Prayer A**

*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. Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

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:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

**✠ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest. 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*

**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.*



I come with joy to meet my Lord,  
    forgiven, loved, and free,  
in awe and wonder to recall  
    his life laid down for me.

I come with Christians far and near  
    to find, as all are fed,  
the new community of love  
    in Christ's communion bread.

As Christ breaks bread and bids us share,  
    each proud division ends.  
That love that made us makes us one,  
    and strangers now are friends.

And thus with joy we meet our Lord.  
    His presence, always near,  
is in such friendship better known:  
    we see, and praise him here.

***Christ, Be Our Light***

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.  
    Longing for truth, we turn to you.  
Make us your own, your holy people,  
    light for the world to see.

*Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.  
Shine through the darkness.*

*Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.  
    Longing for hope, many despair.  
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.  
    Make us your living voice.

*Refrain*

Longing for food, many are hungry.  
    Longing for water, many still thirst.  
Make us your bread, broken for others,  
    Shared until all are fed.

*Refrain*

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.  
Longing for warmth, many are cold.  
Make us your building, sheltering others,  
walls made of living stone.

*Refrain*

Many the gifts, many the people,  
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another,  
making your kingdom come.

*Refrain*

### ***The People join in saying this prayer***

**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.**

*The Celebrant gives the blessing*

May Christ, the Son of God be manifest in you, that your lives may be a light to the world; 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 you for ever.

**People      Amen.**

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**Our Mission**  
is to be one with God  
and humanity in  
Christ  
by living the Gospel  
with love and



**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.  
Verger: 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***

❖ Will Bridges, Senior Warden (2025) ❖ Sue Crouch, Junior Warden (2026)  
❖ Veronica Brown (2025) ❖ Marrjo Shattuck (2025) ❖ Robert Dunn (2026)  
❖ Wayne Mumford (2026) Mike Raley (2027) ❖ Tracy Thompson (2027)  
❖ Chris Welborn (2027)

### ***Associate Vestry Members***

❖ Harry Austin, Jr. (2025) ❖ Kathy Finch (2025) ❖ James Uzun (2025)

### ***Vestry Officers***

❖ Bill Mann, Treasurer ❖ Kathy Finch, Assistant Treasurer  
❖ Jane Buckner, Parish/Vestry Clerk