

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 5, 2024, 8:00 and 10:30 am Worship Services

*As the Father
has loved me,
so I have loved you;
abide in my love.*



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

The flag for May is raised by, *Miriam Tramonti*

In loving memory of her husband, Dick, and in honor of his service
as a Master Sergeant in the Air force during the Korean War.

Prelude

Prelude on “Dix”

M. Burkhardt

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

❖ *Announcements* ❖

The Word of God

Please stand for the Opening Prayer.

Opening Hymn ***All Creatures of Our God and King*** Hymnal 400

All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voices, let us sing:
Alleluia, alleluia!
Bright burning sun with golden beams,
pale silver moon that gently gleams,

*O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Swift flowing water, pure and clear,
make music for your Lord to hear,
Alleluia, alleluia!
Fire, so intense and fiercely bright,
you give to us both warmth and light,

Refrain

All you with mercy in your heart,
forgiving others, take your part,
O sing now: Alleluia!
All you that pain and sorrow bear,
praise God, and cast on him your care:

*O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Let all things their creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness,
O praise him, Alleluia!
Praise God the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One:

Refrain

The People standing, the Celebrant says:

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

People *The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.*

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.

Gloria—All standing, the Celebrant and People sing

Gloria to God: Gloria in excelsis

S280

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.

The Collect for Sixth Sunday of Easter

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

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

Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

People ***Amen.***

The Lessons

May we hear the Word of God through these words.

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles 10:44–48

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

The Word of the Lord

People Thanks be to God.

Psalm 98

To be read responsively by the Lay Reader and the Congregation.

L Sing to the LORD a new song, *
for he has done marvelous things.

**C With his right hand and his holy arm *
has he won for himself the victory.**

L The LORD has made known his victory; *
his righteousness has he openly shown in the sight of the nations.

**C He remembers his mercy and faithfulness
to the house of Israel, *
and all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.**

L Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands; *
lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.

**C Sing to the LORD with the harp, *
with the harp and the voice of song.**

L With trumpets and the sound of the horn *
shout with joy before the King, the LORD.

**C Let the sea make a noise and all that is in it, *
the lands and those who dwell therein.**

L Let the rivers clap their hands, *
and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD,
when he comes to judge the earth.

**C In righteousness shall he judge the world *
and the peoples with equity.**

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 First Letter of John 5:1–6

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

The Word of the Lord
People Thanks be to God.

Love divine, all loves excelling,
 joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
 all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
 pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
 enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
 let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
 nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
 serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
 glory in thy perfect love.

Please stand.

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 John 15: 9–17
People *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

Jesus said to his disciples, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

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

Sermon Hymn

Finish then thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

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 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 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 Justin, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael our Presiding Bishop, Ruth our Bishop, Wilmot our Priest, Kim our Deacon, 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 Joseph our President, Henry our Governor, and Marilyn 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:

Lord, in your mercy.

People Hear our prayer.

**Additional Prayers*

LET US GIVE THANKS FOR OUR VISITORS.

LET US PRAY FOR OUR TRAVELERS THIS WEEK.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO: Peter Berthrong (5/6), Veronica Brown (5/7), Carolyn Huyck (5/9).

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO: Bill & Nancy Mann (5/5), Jane & Frank Panarella (5/8).

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: **Linda Hurst, David & Carolyn Huyck, Kathy & George Ingalls, Joe & Nancy Johnson, Wendy Johnson, Joan Jones, Mary Jones, Chris Kasanicky, Dennis & Karen Kelley, Chuck & Leslie Kelly.**

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.***

The Holy Communion

Offertory

Earth and All Stars

D. Johnson

Hymn of the Month

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

BCP 369

Eucharistic Prayer C

Please remain standing

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.***

Celebrant God of all power, Ruler of the Universe, you are worthy of glory and praise.
People ***Glory to you for ever and ever.***

Celebrant At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

People ***By your will they were created and have their being.***

Celebrant From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us the rulers of creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust; and we turned against one another.

People ***Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight.***

Celebrant Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfill your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace.

People ***By his blood, he reconciled us. By his wounds, we are healed.***

The Celebrant continues

And therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn:

Celebrant and People ~ to be sung
Bow during the underlined text

S130

**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.

Then the Celebrant continues

And so, Father, we who have been redeemed by him, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

On the night he was betrayed he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, 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, gave thanks, 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."

Remembering now his work of redemption, and offering to you this sacrifice of thanksgiving,

People We celebrate his death and resurrection, as we await the day of his coming.

Lord God of our Fathers and Mothers; God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.

People Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the Bread.

Accept these prayers and praises, Father, through Jesus Christ our great High Priest, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, your Church gives honor, glory, and worship, from generation to generation.

People (respond with a loud) 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.

Let Us Break Bread Together on Our Knees

Hymnal 325

Let us break bread together on our knees;
Let us break bread together on our knees;
*when I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.*

Let us drink wine together on our knees;
Let us drink wine together on our knees;
*when I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.*

Let us praise God together on our knees;
Let us praise God together on our knees;
*when I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.*

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.

After Communion, the Celebrant says: Let us pray.

The People join in saying this prayer

Almighty and everliving 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

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.

Please be seated for a brief announcement.

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.**



We Plow the Fields, and Scatter

Hymnal 291

We plow the fields, and scatter
the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered
by God's almighty hand;
he sends the snow in winter,
the warmth to swell the grain,
the breezes and the sunshine,
and soft refreshing rain.

*All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord
for all his love.*

He only is the Maker
of all things near and far;
he paints the wayside flower,
he lights the evening star;
the winds and waves obey him,
by him the birds are fed;
much more to us, his children,
he gives our daily bread.

Refrain

We thank thee, then, O Father,
for all things bright and good,
the seedtime and the harvest,
our life, our health, our food:
the gifts we have to offer
are what thy love imparts,
but chiefly thou desirest
our humble thankful hearts.

Refrain

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 ***Earth and All Stars*** M. Burkhardt

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!

The Rose on the Altar today is given
by Nancy and Bill Mann,
Celebrating our 52nd, with more to come . . .



This Week

- Mon, May 6, 7:00—9:30 pm, Parish Hall in use.
- Tue, May 7, CANCELLED, Rummage Ministry. **Resumes on Tue, May 14.**
- Tue, May 7, 4:00 pm, Parish Hall in use.
- Tue, May 7, Prayer Time, PH Conference Rm.
- Wed, May 8, CANCELLED, Public Service of Healing and Holy Eucharist.
- Wed, May 8, 5:00 pm, Chancel Choir Rehearsal.
- Wed, May 8, 7:00—9:30 pm, Parish Hall in use.
- Thu, May 8, 10:00 am, Alzheimer’s Support Group, PH Conference Rm.
- Fri, May 9, 4:00 pm, Mobile Meals Executive Committee Meeting, PH Conf Rm.
- Sat, May 10, Committal Service, Columbarium.

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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

Deacon: The Rev. Kim Hoop

Dir of Music: Roberta Rowland-Raybold, c.a.g.o.

Vergers: Cathy Fellows and Robert Dunn

MINISTERS, LAYLEADERS AND STAFF

The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry, 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

❖ Betty Berginski, Senior Warden (2024) ❖ Will Bridges, Junior Warden (2025)

❖ Richard B. Martin, Jr. (2024) ❖ Bill Simpson, Jr. (2024)

❖ Veronica Brown (2025) ❖ Marrjo Shattuck (2025) ❖ Sue Crouch (2026)

❖ Robert Dunn (2026) ❖ Wayne Mumford (2026).

Associate Vestry Members

❖ Barbara DiMartini (2024) ❖ Bud Nelson (2024) ❖ Mike Raley (2024).

Vestry Officers

❖ Bill Mann, Treasurer ❖ Cheri Spence, Assistant Treasurer

❖ Jane Buckner, Parish/Vestry Clerk, Vickie Arrington, Asst Parish/Vestry Clerk

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