

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH All Are Welcome!

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 29, 2024, 10:00 am Worship Service

CONFIRMATION, RECEPTION, AND HOLY EUCHARIST

"Salt is good;
but if salt has
lost its saltiness,
how can you
season it?



Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

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 September is raised,

"In loving memory of my husband Art, and in honor of his service in the Navy during the Korean Conflict. It will also fly in memory and honor of my dad, Samuel Steward Jr., who served in the Army during World War I in France; and in honor of my son, Lester Pullen, who served in the Navy during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. They all served their country well."

Eloise Perry

Prelude

Fantasia for Clarinet

Diane Dance

† 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

Praise to the Living God

Hymnal 372

Praise to the living God! All praised be his Name who was, and is, and is to be for ay the same.

The one eternal God ere aught that now appears:

the first, the last, beyond all thought his timeless years!

Formless, all lovely forms declare his loveliness; holy, no holiness of earth can his express.

Lo, he is Lord of all. Creation speaks his praise, and everywhere above, below, his will obeys.

His Spirit floweth free, high surging where it will: in prophet's word he spoke of old; he speaketh still.

Established is his law, and changeless it shall stand, deep writ upon the human heart, on sea, on land.

Eternal life hath he implanted in the soul; his love shall be our strength and stay while ages roll. Praise to the living God! All praised be his Name

who was, and is, and is to be, for ay the same.

CONFIRMATION WITH A FORM OF RECEPTION AND THE HOLY EUCHARIST: RITE TWO

The People standing, the Bishop says:

Blessed be God: + Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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

The Bishop then continues:

Bishop There is one Body and one Spirit:

People There is one hope in God's call to us;

Bishop One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;

People One God and Father of all.

The Collect for the Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Bishop The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Bishop Let us pray.

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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 Book of Esther 7:1–6, 9–10; 9:20–22*

The king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me — that is my petition — and the lives of my people — that is my request. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king." Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?" Esther said, "A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that." So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated.

Mordecai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same month, year by year, as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor.

The Word of the Lord **People Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 124

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

- L If the LORD had not been on our side, * let Israel now say;
- C If the LORD had not been on our side, * when enemies rose up against us;
- L Then would they have swallowed us up alive * in their fierce anger toward us;
- C Then would the waters have overwhelmed us * and the torrent gone over us;
- L Then would the raging waters * have gone right over us.
- C Blessed be the LORD! *
 he has not given us over to be a prey for their teeth.
- L We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler; * the snare is broken, and we have escaped.
- C Our help is in the Name of the LORD, * the maker of heaven and earth.

Bishop 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 James 5:13—20*

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

The Word of the Lord **People Thanks be to God.**

Gradual Hymn

It is Well With My Soul

LEVAS 188

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, When sorrows like seabillows roll; Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul.

It is well, with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though satan should buffet, though trials should come, Let this blest assurance control, That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, And has shed His own blood for my soul.

Refrain

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 Mark 9:38–50 **People** Glory to you, Lord Christ.

John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

"If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

"For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

The Gospel of the Lord

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon Hymn

My sin oh, the bliss of this glorious thought My sin not in part, but the whole Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

It is well, with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.

And, Lord, hast the day when the faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll, The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, "Even so" it is well with my soul.

Refrain

❖ Sermon The Right Rev. Ruth Woodliff-Stanley ❖



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

Presentation and Examination of the Candidates

The Bishop says

The Candidates will now be presented.

The Rector says

I present **Denny** for Confirmation.

The Rector says

I present John, Dory, and Linda to be received into this Communion.

The Bishop asks the Candidates

Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil?

Candidates I do.

Bishop Do you renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?

Candidates I do, and with God's grace I will follow him as my Savior and Lord.

The Bishop addresses the congregation saying,

Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?

People We will.

The Bishop then says these words

Let us join with those who are committing themselves to Christ and renew our own baptismal covenant.

The Baptismal Covenant

Bishop Do you believe in God the Father?

People I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of

heaven and earth.

Bishop Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

People I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit

and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the

right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Bishop Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

People I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the

resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Bishop Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in

the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

People I will, with God's help.

Bishop Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into

sin, repent and return to the Lord?

People I will, with God's help.

Bishop Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God

in Christ?

People I will, with God's help.

Bishop Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your

neighbor as yourself?

People I will, with God's help.

Bishop Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and

respect the dignity of every human being?

People I will, with God's help.

Prayers for the Candidates

The Bishop then says to the Congregation

Let us now pray for these persons who have renewed their commitment to Christ.

Please sit or kneel for the Prayers, while the Candidates kneel at the rail. A period of silence follows.

Leader Deliver them, O Lord, from the way of sin and death.

People Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader Open their hearts to your grace and truth.

People Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader Fill them with your holy and life-giving Spirit.

People Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader Keep them in the faith and communion of your holy Church.

People Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader Teach them to love others in the power of the Spirit.

People Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader Send them into the world in witness to your love.

People Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader Bring them to the fullness of your peace and glory.

People Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us also pray for Justin, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael our Presiding Bishop, Sean, our Presiding Bishop-Elect, 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.

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, especially First Responders, 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 First Responders and 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.

A period of silence follows.

Then the Bishop says

Almighty God, we thank you that by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ you have overcome sin and brought us to yourself, and that by the sealing of your Holy Spirit you have bound us to your service. Renew in these your servants the covenant you made with them at their Baptism. Send them forth in the power of that Spirit to perform the service you set before them; through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

People Amen.

The Candidates stand and face the Bishop.

For Confirmation ~ **Denny** stands before the Bishop

The Bishop lays hands upon the Candidate and says

Strengthen, O Lord, your servant *Denny* with your Holy Spirit; empower *him* for your service; and sustain *him* all the days of *his* life.

People Amen

For Reception ~ John, Dory, and Linda stand before the Bishop.

N, we recognize you as a member of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, and we receive you into the fellowship of this Communion. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you.

People Amen

The Bishop concludes with this prayer

Almighty and ever living God, let your fatherly hand ever be over these your servants; let your Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of your Word, that they may serve you in this life, and dwell with you in the life to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People Amen

All remain standing

The Peace

Jesus said, Peace I leave with you; my Peace I give to you . . . John 14:27

Bishop People

The peace of the Lord be always with you. And also with you.

At the conclusion of the peace, the Bishop says:

God is Good! **Bishop People** All the Time.

The Holy Communion

Our plate collection this morning is designated to Bishop Ruth's discretionary fund.

Offertory

How Firm a Foundation

T. Trenney

Chancel Choir

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

Please remain standing

Bishop: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Bishop: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Bishop: 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:

Bishop and People Bow during the underlined text S129

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:

Bishop and People
Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

The Bishop 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.

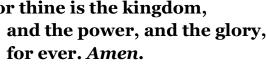
All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever.

People Amen.

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

Bishop 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,







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 Bishop 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.

They'll Know We Are Christians

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord And we pray that all unity may one day be restored

And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land

Refrain

We will work with each other, we will work side by side We will work with each other, we will work side by side And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride

Refrain

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come And all praise to Christ Jesus, his only Son And all praise to the Spirit who makes us one

Refrain

In This Feast of Love



Text: Jarkko Maukonen; tr. Mark Sedio, b. 1954 Music: TÄSSÄ PÖYDÄSSÄ, Jarkko Maukonen; arr. Mark Sedio Text and music © 2017, 2020 Jarkko Maukonen, admin. Augsburg Fortress *After Communion, the Bishop says:* Let us pray.

The People join in saying this prayer,

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 Bishop gives the blessing

Our help is in the Name of the Lord;

People The maker of heaven and earth.

Blessed be the Name of the Lord;

People From this time forth for evermore.

The blessing, mercy, and grace of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you, and remain with 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.



Closing Hymn **The Church's One Foundation**

Hymnal 525

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.

Though with a scornful wonder men see her sore oppressed, by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed; yet saints their watch are keeping, their cry goes up, "How long?" and soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.

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.

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

People By living the Gospel with love and compassion.

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

People Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Postlude **Introdu**

Introduction & Toccata

G. Frescobaldi

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*



The Flowers on the Altar today are given by *Ann McIntyre*

In memory of her husband of 42 years, Ron.

"In Loving Memory of Us. Always and Forever."





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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 Right Rev. Ruth Woodliff-Stanley

Rector: The Very Rev. Canon Dr. Wilmot T. Merchant II

Deacon: The Rev. Kim Hoop

Director of Music: Roberta Rowland-Raybold

Vergers: Cathy Fellows and Robert Dunn

MINISTERS, and LAY LEADERS

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

- ❖ Will Bridges, Senior 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

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 801 11th Avenue North, North Myrtle Beach SC 29582, 843.249.1169