



ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

All Are Welcome!

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 19, 2025, 8:00 and 10:30 am Worship Services



Justice as Protector and Avenger

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 October is raised by Peter & Mary Ann Berthrong,
“In loving memory of Keith Andrew Berthrong,
our beloved son who died too soon.”

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

Prelude

There Is a Happy Land

G. Shearing

The Word of God

Please stand.

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.

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

Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart Hymnal 556

Rejoice, ye pure in heart!

Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

Your glorious banner wave on high,
the cross of Christ your King.

Rejoice, rejoice,

rejoice, give thanks, and sing.

With all the angel choirs,
with all the saints of earth,
pour out the strains of joy and bliss,
true rapture, noblest mirth.

Refrain

Your clear hosannas raise,
and alleluias loud;
while answering echoes upward float,
Like wreaths of incense cloud.

Refrain

The Collect for The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

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

Celebrant Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, in Christ you have revealed your glory among the nations: Preserve the works of your mercy, that your Church throughout the world may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of your Name; 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 Genesis 32:22–31

The same night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

The Word of the Lord

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

Psalm 121

To be read responsively by the Lay Reader and Congregation.

L I lift up my eyes to the hills; *
from where is my help to come?

**C My help comes from the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.**

L He will not let your foot be moved *
and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

**C Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel *
shall neither slumber nor sleep;**

L The LORD himself watches over you; *
the LORD is your shade at your right hand,

**C So that the sun shall not strike you by day, *
nor the moon by night.**

L The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; *
it is he who shall keep you safe.

**C The LORD shall watch over your going out
and your coming in, *
from this time forth for evermore.**

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 Second Letter of Paul to Timothy 3:14–4:5

As for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

The Word of the Lord

People Thanks be to God.

I love to tell the story
Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory,
Of Jesus and His love.
I love to tell the story,
Because I know it's true;
It satisfies my longings
As nothing else would do.

*I love to tell the story;
'Twill be my theme in glory.
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and His love.*

I love to tell the story,
For those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting
To hear it, like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
'Twill be the old, old story
That I have loved so long.

Refrain

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 Luke 18:1—8
People *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

Jesus told his disciples a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Grant me justice against my opponent.’ For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, ‘Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’” And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

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

Sermon Hymn

LEVAS 64

I love to tell the story
 Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory,
 Of Jesus and His love.
I love to tell the story,
 Because I know it's true;
It satisfies my longings
 As nothing else would do.

*I love to tell the story;
Twill be my theme in glory.
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and His love.*

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

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, 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 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 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.

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. Anne's Episcopal Church, Conway, The Rev. Kevin Sparrow, Rector, *and The Episcopal Church.*

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: Ann McIntyre (10/19), Sandra Schultz (10/19), Linda Shorts (10/19), Dean Graves (10/20).

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO: Jack & Debby Early (10/23).

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: **Jay & Linda Crocker, Sue & Ridge Crouch, Sally D'Alessio, Susan Davenport, Dennis & Deb Davidson, Sally Davis, Ralph DeAngelis, Jerry & Andrea Deberry, Dorothy Dexter, Scott & Cheri Dilliard.**

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 *Sing Praise to God*

R. Aarons

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

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.

Spirit Song

LEVAS 118

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you,
with His Spirit and His love,
Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul.
Oh, let Him have the things that hold you,
and His Spirit like a dove,
Will descend upon your life,
and make you whole.

*Jesus. Oh, Jesus, come and fill your lambs.
Jesus. Oh, Jesus, come and fill your lambs.*

Oh, come and sing this song with gladness,
as your hearts are filled with joy,
Lift your hands in sweet surrender to His name.
Oh, give Him all your tears and sadness,
give Him all your years of pain,
And you'll enter into life
in Jesus' name.

Refrain

Sweet Hour of Prayer

LEVAS 178

Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
That calls me from a world of care,
And bids me at my Father's throne
Make all my wants and wishes known.
In seasons of distress and grief
My soul has often found relief.
And oft escaped the tempter's snare
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer.

Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
Thy wings shall my petition bear
To Him whose truth and faithfulness
Engage the waiting soul to bless;
And since He bids me seek His face,
Believe His word and trust His grace.
I'll cast on Him my ev'ry care,
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer.

Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
May I thy consolation share,
Till from Mount Pisgah's lofty height
I view my home and take my flight:
This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise
To seize the everlasting prize.
And shout, while passing through the air,
"Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer!"

I serve a risen Savior,
He's in the world today;
I know that He is living,
whatever others say;
I see His hand of mercy,
I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him
He's always near.

*He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.*

In all the world around me
I see His loving care,
And though my heart grows weary
I never will despair;
I know that He is leading
through all the stormy blast,
The day of His appearing
will come at last.

Refrain

Rejoice, rejoice. O Christian,
lift up your voice and sing.
Eternal hallelujahs
to Jesus Christ, the King!
The hope of all who seek Him,
the help of all who find,
None other is so loving,
so good and kind.

Refrain

After Communion, the Celebrant says

Celebrant The Lord be with you

People *And also with you*

Celebrant 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 . . .

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.



Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free;
to take away transgression, and rule in equity.

He comes with succor speedy to those who suffer wrong,
to help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying, were precious in his sight.

Kings shall bow down before him, and gold and incense bring;
all nations shall adore him, his praise all people sing;
to him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend;
his kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.

O'er every foe victorious, he on his throne shall rest;
from age to age more glorious, all-blessing and all-blest:
the tide of time shall never his covenant remove;
his Name shall stand for ever, his changeless Name of Love.

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.***

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 Altar Flowers today are
given by Norma Spence,
in loving memory of her Dad.

“In life I loved you dearly
In death I love you still
God has you in his keeping
I have you in my heart.”



God is good! All the time!

Cover— Mural: "Justice as Protector & Avenger," by Stefan Hirsch in the courtroom of the Charles E. Simons Jr. Federal Court House, named for District Court Judge Charles Earl Simons Jr. in 1986, located in Aiken, South Carolina.

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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.
Vergers: Cathy Fellows and 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

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