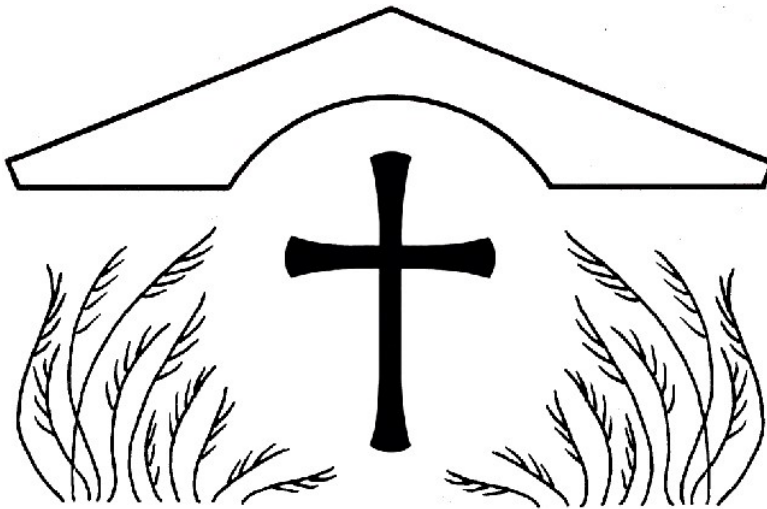


ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 3, 2023



Ministers

Rector

Deacon

Senior Warden

Junior Warden

Minister of Music

Cantor

Administrative Assistant

The People of the Parish

The Rev. Christy Laborda Harris

The Rev. Kate Sefton

Jean Farmer

Meg Nalley

Miles McKenzie

Kristina Ibarra

Jun Kim

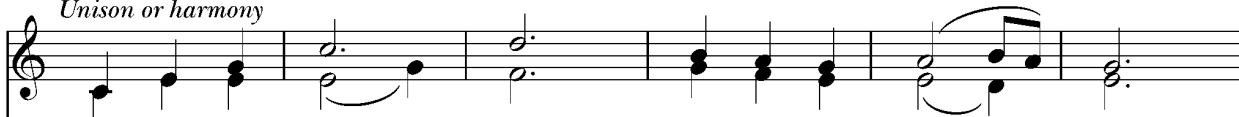
The Gathering of the Community

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Morning has Broken

please stand

Unison or harmony



1 Morn-ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing,
2 Sweet the rain's new fall sun - lit from hea - ven,
3 Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing



black-bird has spo - ken like the first bird. _____
like the first dew - fall on the first grass. _____
born of the one light E - den saw play! _____



Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the morn - ing!
Praise for the sweet - ness of the wet gar - den,
Praise with e - la - tion, praise ev - ery morn - ing,



Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word! _____
sprung in com - plete - ness where his feet pass. _____
God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day! _____

Great Creating Spirit
A Celtic Earth Mass for the Celebration of Communion
by John Philip Newell

Come, come, O Christ,
and stand in our midst
as you did stand in the midst of your disciples,
and speak to us words of peace.

Peace to each woman, peace to each man.
Peace to each family, peace to each child.
Peace to the creatures, peace to the nations.
Peace in our hearts, peace in our world.

Come, come, O Christ,
and stand in our midst
as you did stand in the midst of your disciples,
and speak to us words of peace.

Come to us from the heart of God.
Come to us from the garden of our beginnings.
Come to us from the center of this moment.
Come to us from the true depths of our soul.

Come, come, O Christ,
and stand in our midst
as you did stand in the midst of your disciples,
and speak to us words of peace.

SONG OF PRAISE

O God, You Search Me

**O God, you search me and you know me.
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.
When I walk or lie down you are before me:
Ever the maker and keeper of my days.**

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The Liturgy of the Word

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Passionate Lord, walking to Golgotha in the midst of our confusion: free us from our images of you which keep you enthroned in idle power, apart from the pain and sin of the world; lead us to embrace the scandal of the cross and let our violence die that greater life might rise; through Jesus Christ, who took the form of a slave. **Amen.**

A READING FROM THE PROPHET JEREMIAH (15:15-21)

please be seated

O Lord, you know;

remember me and visit me,

and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors.

In your forbearance do not take me away;

know that on your account I suffer insult.

Your words were found, and I ate them,

and your words became to me a joy

and the delight of my heart;

for I am called by your name,

O Lord, God of hosts.

I did not sit in the company of merrymakers,

nor did I rejoice;

under the weight of your hand I sat alone,

for you had filled me with indignation.

Why is my pain unceasing,

my wound incurable,

refusing to be healed?

Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook,

like waters that fail.

Therefore, thus says the Lord:

If you turn back, I will take you back,

and you shall stand before me.
If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless,
you shall serve as my mouth.
It is they who will turn to you,
not you who will turn to them.
And I will make you to this people
a fortified wall of bronze;
they will fight against you,
but they shall not prevail over you,
for I am with you
to save you and deliver you,
says the Lord.
I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked,
and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 26:1-8

- 1 Give judgment for me, O Lord, for I have lived with integrity; *
I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered.**
- 2 Test me, O Lord, and try me; *
examine my heart and my mind.**
- 3 For your love is before my eyes; *
I have walked faithfully with you.**
- 4 I have not sat with the worthless, *
nor do I consort with the deceitful.**
- 5 I have hated the company of evildoers; *
I will not sit down with the wicked.**
- 6 I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord, *
that I may go in procession round your altar,**

**7 Singing aloud a song of thanksgiving *
and recounting all your wonderful deeds.**

**8 Lord, I love the house in which you dwell *
and the place where your glory abides.**

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GOSPEL READING

Matthew 16:21-28

please stand

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?"

"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

SERMON

The Rev. Kate Sefton

please be seated

A period of silent reflection follows the sermon

**Hold me in life for you are my safety,
Always my eyes are looking for you.**

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE—*New Zealand Book of Prayer*

Heavenly Father, you have promised to hear when we pray in the name of your Son. Therefore in confidence and trust we pray for the Church:

Father, enliven the Church for its mission
that we may be salt of the earth and light to the world.

Breathe fresh life into your people.
Give us power to reveal Christ in word and action.

We pray for the world:

Creator of all, lead us and every people into ways of justice and peace.
That we may respect one another in freedom and truth.

Awaken in us a sense of wonder for the earth and all that is in it.
Teach us to care creatively for its resources.

We pray for the community:

God of truth, inspire with your wisdom those whose decisions affect the lives of others
that all may act with integrity and courage.

Give grace to all whose lives are linked with ours.
May we serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.

We pray for those in need:

God of hope, comfort and restore all who suffer in body, mind or spirit, we pray especially for all those we now name...
May they know the power of your healing love.

Make us willing agents of your compassion.

Strengthen us as we share in making people whole.

We remember those who have died and those who mourn:

We remember with thanksgiving those who have died in the faith of Christ, and those whose faith is known to you alone. We remember those we now name...

Father, into your hands we commend them.

Give comfort to those who mourn.

Bring them peace in their time of loss.

We praise you for all your saints who have entered your eternal glory.

May their example inspire and encourage us.

We pray for ourselves and our ministries:

Lord, you have called us to serve you.

Grant that we may walk in your presence: your love in our hearts, your truth in our minds, your strength in our wills; until, at the end of our journey, we know the joy of our homecoming and the welcome of your embrace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONFESSION

We confess our sin, and the sins of our society,
in the misuse of God's creation.

God our Father, we are sorry
for the times when we have used your gifts carelessly,
and acted ungratefully.

Hear our prayer, and in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**

We enjoy the fruits of the harvest,
but sometimes forget that you have given them to us.

Hear our prayer, and in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**

We belong to a people who are full and satisfied,
but ignore the cry of the hungry.

Hear our prayer, and in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**

We are thoughtless,
and do not care enough for the world you have made.
Hear our prayer, and in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**

We store up goods for ourselves alone,
as if there were no God and no heaven.
Hear our prayer, and in your mercy: **forgive us and help us.**

May the God of love and power
forgive and free you,
heal and strengthen you by the Spirit,
and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

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

*You are invited to pass the peace
distanced and respectfully.*

The Holy Communion

OFFERTORY SOLO

Lead Me, Guide Me
Doris M. Akers

please be seated

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

Listen as They Rise

please stand

**Hear our prayers as they rise up like incense,
And spread throughout the skies.
Hear our prayers as they rise up like incense,
Listen as they rise.**

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Great Creating Spirit from whom all life comes forth, here we gather again with bread and with wine, seeking your presence, longing once more to be nourished, hungering for wholeness in our lives, for unity on earth and for peace among the nations.

**Here we gather with bread and wine
but with more than bread and wine.**

Here we gather with creation's elements all around us, with earth, air, fire and water still expanding through the universe, with the glory of the sun, the whiteness of the moon, the glittering of heaven's lights off flowing waters.

**Here we gather with bread and wine
but with more than bread and wine.**

Here we gather with the firm fecundity of the earth, the growing and greening of trees, creatures of the day and night, birds of the air, all full of your glory, all bearers of your presence, all part of the great harmony that we long to touch and taste and become one with again.

**Here we gather with bread and wine
but with more than bread and wine.**

So with everything that we see and sense around us, with visible and invisible energies that pulse with life, we join our souls in the song that vibrates throughout the whole of creation,

Call and Response

**Holy, holy, holy God of power and might,
Heaven and Earth are full of your glory
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest,
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest,**

**Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest,
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest,**

Heaven and earth are full of your glory, O God. Your presence fills all things. Yet what have we done?

Creation marred by neglect and abuse

life-forms torn forever out of the fabric of the universe

nature ravaged

wealth wasted

earth's community divided

nations at war

communities fractured

families broken

the human soul sick and far from home.

Great Creating Spirit, hear our plea for mercy,

hear our prayers for the earth.

Into our brokenness came the memory of wholeness

into our fear came the messenger of love

Christ born among us

one with us

child of heaven

son of womankind

bearer of forgiveness

healer of our nature

teacher of wisdom

prophet of peace

rejected by the religious

crucified by the state

companion of our soul

lover of the earth.

With his disciples at table on the night of his arrest, Jesus blessed the bread and said, "This is my body, broken for you. Do this to remember me."

With his disciples at table on the night of his arrest, Jesus blessed the wine and said, "This is my lifeblood, poured out for you. Do this to remember me."

Come upon us with your Spirit, O God, and upon this bread of the earth.

May it feed our longings for peace.

Come upon us with your Spirit, O God, and upon this cup of unity.

May it set us free to love.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, we worship you our God and Creator in voices of unending praise.

Blessed are you now and for ever. Amen.

As Jesus taught, we now pray.

**Ground of all being, Mother of life,
Father of the universe.**

**May we know your presence here,
seeking your will upon earth.**

**Grant all your creatures food for today
and strength for our families.**

**Pardon our falseness as we forgive
those who are untrue to us.**

**Do not forsake us in our need
but lead us to new birth.**

**For the glory of life and the light of life
are yours forever. Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread to share in the Body of Christ.

We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread.

Wherever you are on your journey of faith,

You are welcome at this table.

All are welcome at the Lord's table. You are invited to come forward when the ushers indicate. Please extend your hands together to receive the bread. If you are gluten free, please let us know. If you prefer a blessing, please cross your arms across your chest. If you would like your bread intincted (dipped in the chalice) please let the clergy person with the bread know before the bread is handed to you. It will be intincted for you and handed to you. We are no longer able to allow you to intinct the bread yourself nor are we able to place it in your mouth. Alternately, you may sip directly from the chalice or choose to receive the bread only.

**Do not be afraid, do not be afraid.
Have courage! It is I.**

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POST COMMUNION PRAYER

please stand

Let us pray,

Great Creating Spirit, who swept over the depths of the unknown to give birth to creation in all its splendor.

Great Creating Spirit, who conceived new life in the womb of Mary to give birth to the Child of Peace.

Great Creating Spirit, who hovers over the waters of the human soul today to give birth to healings and visions that have never been before.

You come to us as an earth community.

You come to us as nations of the world.

You grant us wholeness.

You grant us healing.

Grant us together a new language that we may be one. Amen.

BLESSING

Deep peace of the running wave to you.

Deep peace of the flowing air to you.

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.

Deep peace of the shining stars to you.

Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon you now and remain with you always. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Go now, in the peace of God, to continue in the work of love, healing, and wholeness. Alleluia.
Alleluia.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

CLOSING HYMN

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

Unison ^C

1 I have de - cid - ed to fol - low Je - sus, I have de -
 2 The world be - hind me, the cross be - fore me, the world be -
 3 Though none go with me, I still will fol - low, though none go
 4 Will you de - cide now to fol - low Je - sus? Will you de -

cid - ed to fol - low Je - sus, I have de - cid - ed to fol - low
 hind me, the cross be - fore me, the world be - hind me, the cross be -
 with me, I still will fol - low, though none go with me, I still will
 cide now to fol - low Je - sus? Will you de - cide now to fol - low

Je - sus— no turn - ing back, no turn - ing back.
 fore me— no turn - ing back, no turn - ing back.
 fol - low— no turn - ing back, no turn - ing back.
 Je - sus?— no turn - ing back, no turn - ing back.

^{C7} ^F ^C ^{C/G} ^{D9/A} ^{G7/B} ^C

For a Birthday

Watch over thy child(ren), O Lord, as *their* days increase; bless and guide *them* wherever *they* may be. Strengthen *them* when *they* stand(s); comfort *them* when discouraged or sorrowful; raise *them* up if *they* fall(s); and in *their* heart(s) may thy peace which passeth understanding abide all the days of *their* life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For an Anniversary

Almighty God, Giver of life and love: Bless those whom You have joined in holy matrimony. Grant them wisdom and devotion in the ordering of their life together, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a counselor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy. And so knit their wills together in Your Will, and their spirits in Your Spirit, that they may show forth Your Love and abide in Your Peace all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.