



ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Feast of St. Francis of Assisi

October 1, 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

All Things Bright and Beautiful

please stand

Refrain



All things bright and beau - ti - ful, All crea - tures great and small,



All things wise and won - der - ful, The Lord God made them all.

Verses



1. Each lit - tle flow'r that o - pens, Each
2. The pur - ple - head - ed moun - tain, The
3. The cold wind in the win - ter, The
4. God gave us eyes to see them, And



1. lit - tle bird that sings, God made their glow - ing
2. riv - er run - ning by, The sun - set, and the
3. pleas - ant sum - mer sun, The ripe fruits in the
4. lips that we might tell How great is God Al -



1. col - ors, God made their ti - ny wings.
2. morn - ing That bright - ens up the sky.
3. gar - den, God made them ev - ery one.
4. might - y, Who has made all things well.

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Presider Blessed be God, Creator, Word and Spirit;
People Who brings all things into being and calls them good.

Presider Bless your Creator, all animals of the land.
People Let us praise and exalt our Creator together.

Presider Bless your Creator, all birds of the air.
People Let us praise and exalt our Creator together.

Presider Bless your Creator, all creatures of the sea.
People Let us praise and exalt our Creator together.

Presider Bless your Creator, all children of God.
People Let us praise and exalt our Creator together.

SONG OF PRAISE

Sacred Creation

Refrain:

**Sacred the land, sacred the water,
Sacred the sky, holy and true.
Sacred all life, sacred each other;
All reflect God who is good.**

The Liturgy of the Word

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Most high, omnipotent, good Lord, grant your people grace to renounce gladly the vanities of this world; that, following the way of blessed Francis, we may, for love of you, delight in your whole creation with perfectness of joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

"Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?
Do you observe the calving of the deer?
Can you number the months that they fulfil,
and do you know the time when they give birth,
when they crouch to give birth to their offspring,
and are delivered of their young?
Their young ones become strong, they grow up in the open;
they go forth, and do not return to them.

"Who has let the wild ass go free?
Who has loosed the bonds of the swift ass,
to which I have given the steppe for its home,
the salt land for its dwelling-place?
It scorns the tumult of the city;
it does not hear the shouts of the driver.
It ranges the mountains as its pasture,
and it searches after every green thing.

"Is the wild ox willing to serve you?
Will it spend the night at your crib?
Can you tie it in the furrow with ropes,
or will it harrow the valleys after you?
Will you depend on it because its strength is great,
and will you hand over your labour to it?
Do you have faith in it that it will return,
and bring your grain to your threshing-floor?

"The ostrich's wings flap wildly,
though its pinions lack plumage.
For it leaves its eggs to the earth,
and lets them be warmed on the ground,
forgetting that a foot may crush them,
and that a wild animal may trample them.
It deals cruelly with its young, as if they were not its own;
though its labour should be in vain, yet it has no fear;

because God has made it forget wisdom,
and given it no share in understanding.
When it spreads its plumes aloft,
it laughs at the horse and its rider."

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 121

- 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills; *
from where is my help to come?**
- 2 My help comes from God, *
the maker of heaven and earth.**
- 3 God will not let your foot be moved; *
the One who watches over you will not fall asleep.**
- 4 Behold, the One who keeps watch over Israel *
shall neither slumber nor sleep;**
- 5 The Holy One watches over you *
and is your shade at your right hand,**
- 6 So that the sun shall not strike you by day, *
nor the moon by night.**
- 7 God shall preserve you from all evil *
and is the One who shall keep you safe.**
- 8 God shall watch over your going out and your coming in, *
from this time forth for evermore.**

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A READING FROM MEISTER ECKHART

Apprehend God in all things,
for God is in all things.
Every single creature is full of God,
and is a book about God.
Every creature is a word of God.
If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature—
even a caterpillar—
I would never have to prepare a sermon,
so full of God
is every creature.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 11:25-30

please stand

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

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

Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

SERMON

The Rev. Christy Laborda Harris

please be seated

A period of silent reflection follows the sermon



1. God of love, your gift of peace is plant - ed
2. God of peace, wher - ev - er there is ha - tred,
3. May we bring your hope and glad - ness where de -
4. May we seek to un - der - stand an - oth - er
5. Faith - ful God, wher - ev - er there is dark - ness,
6. God of mer - cy, help us to for - give when
7. Gra - cious God, when - ev - er peo - ple hun - ger,
8. Set us free from all our fear and an - ger;



1. deep with - in our hearts: Make me an in - stru - ment
2. may we bring your love:
3. spair and sad - ness are:
4. with a pa - tient heart:
5. may we bring your light:
6. there is in - jury done:
7. may we fill their need:
8. set us free to love:



of your peace. Make me an in - stru - ment of your peace.

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LITANY FOR CREATION AND ALL CREATURES

Presider

We name in thanksgiving those animals for whom we care...

We name in thanksgiving those animals who have been our companions over the years and are no longer with us...

We remember the unnamed, unknown animals whose lives have benefited our own.

Silence

Intercessor People Grant that all your creatures may thank and serve you;
Shower your blessing on earth, O God.

Intercessor People Grant favorable weather, temperate rain, and fruitful seasons, providing food and drink for all your creatures;
Shower your blessing on earth, O God.

Intercessor People Open our eyes to the joy and beauty of creation, that we may see your presence in all your works;
Shower your blessing on earth, O God.

Intercessor People Look with favor upon all who care for the earth, the water, and the air, that the riches of creation may abound for all your creatures;
Shower your blessing on earth, O God.

Intercessor People Make us faithful stewards of creation, wisely caring for the earth, the air, the seas, and all the life they bear;
Shower your blessing on earth, O God.

Intercessor People Awaken us to our responsibility for the care of creation;
Shower your blessing on earth, O God.

Intercessor People Forgive us our waste and pollution of creation and strengthen us to heal wounds we have inflicted;
Shower your blessing on earth, O God.

Intercessor People Remember all in captivity and those who are hunted, trapped, deserted, or abused, that they may find safety in homes of loving care;
Shower your blessing on earth, O God.

Intercessor People Do not forget those animals who have died yet remain dear to us, that they may rejoice in your new creation;
Shower your blessing on earth, O God.

Presider Holy God: No sparrow falls without your attention; nothing dies that is lost to you; nothing comes into being without your love. Give us just and compassionate hearts, that we may serve the earth and all its creatures, holding fast to the vision of your peaceable reign in which all will live with you eternally; through the Risen One, Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

CONFESSION

Let us confess to God our sins against our fellow creatures.

**God of compassion, have mercy upon us.
Bring healing to our relationship with all your creation.
Forgive us for our mistreatment and neglect
of the creatures with whom we share your earth:
for what we have done to harm them,
and for what we have not done to help them.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
We ask you to fill us with your Spirit,
that we may care for one another and for all your creatures,
according to your will and in the fullness of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

THE BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Presider It is the priestly work of all God's people to give thanks for God's blessings to us, to ask for and lend assistance for all in need, and to stretch our hands to heal and to cherish creatures of God; this is our work of blessing.

People **Fellow creatures, friends and companions: May God your creator and preserver bless, defend, heal, and keep you, this day and always. Amen.**

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, Creator of all things and giver of all life: Let your blessing be upon these and all animals. May our relationships with them mirror your love, and may our care for them follow the example of your bountiful mercy. Grant these animals health and peace. Strengthen us to love and care for them as we strive, like God's servant Francis of Assisi, to imitate Jesus 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 HYMN

St. Francis Song
Led by the Children of St. Stephen's

please be seated

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

All who are Thirsty
Call and Response

please stand

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER—*Great Creating Spirit by John Philip Newell*

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.

COMMUNION HYMN

Make Me a Channel of Your Peace



1. Make me a chan - nel of your peace. Where
2. Make me a chan - nel of your peace. Where
4. Make me a chan - nel of your peace. It



there is ha - tred, let me bring your love. Where
there's de - spir in life, let me bring hope. Where
is in par - don - ing that we are par - doned, in



there is in - ju - ry, your par - don, Lord, And
there is dark - ness, on - ly light, And
giv - ing of our - selves that we re - ceive, and in



where there's doubt, true faith in you.
where there's sad - ness, ev - er joy.
dy - ing that we're born to e - ter - nal life.

Oh, Mas-ter, grant that I may nev-er seek So much to be con -
 soled as to con - sole. To be un-der-stood as to un-der -
 stand. To be loved as to love with all my soul. **D.C.**

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POST COMMUNION PRAYER—*attributed to St. Francis*

please stand

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

BLESSING

Live without fear: your Creator has made you holy, has always protected you, and loves you as a mother. Go I peace to follow the good road and may God's blessing be with you always.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

please stand

Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit. Alleluia, alleluia.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

CLOSING HYMN



1 All crea - tures of our God and King, lift up your voic - es, let us
 *2 Great rush - ing winds and breez - es soft, you clouds that ride the heavens a -
 *3 Swift flow - ing wa - ter, pure and clear, make mu - sic for your Lord to
 4 Dear mo - ther earth, you day by day un - fold your bless - ings on our
 5 All you with mer - cy in your heart, for - giv - ing o - thers, take your
 *6 And ev - en you, most gen - tle death, wait - ing to hush our fi - nal
 7 Let all things their cre - a - tor bless, and wor - ship him in hum - ble -



1 sing: Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Bright burn - ing
 2 loft, O — praise him, Al - le - lu - ia! Fair ris - ing
 3 hear, Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Fire, so in -
 4 way, O — praise him, Al - le - lu - ia! All flowers and
 5 part, O — sing now: Al - le - lu - ia! All you that
 6 breath, O — praise him, Al - le - lu - ia! You lead back
 7 ness, O — praise him, Al - le - lu - ia! Praise God the



1 sun with gold - en beams, pale sil - ver moon that gen - tly gleams,
 2 morn, with praise re - joice, stars night - ly shin - ing, find a voice,
 3 tense and fierce - ly bright, you give to us both warmth and light,
 4 fruits that in you grow, let them his glo - ry al - so show:
 5 pain and sor - row bear, praise God, and cast on him your care:
 6 home the child of God, for Christ our Lord that way has trod:
 7 Fa - ther, praise the Son, and praise the Spi - rit, Three in One:

Refrain



O praise him, O praise him, Al - le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

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.