

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

All Hallows' Service

October 29, 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

**Within our darkest night,
You kindle the fire that never dies away,
Never dies away.**

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Presider Light and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, and the light around me turn to night," darkness is not dark to you, O Lord; the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike.

Let us pray.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this life; for the love of thy only Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ . **Amen.**

A BLESSING FOR TRAVELING IN THE DARK—*Jan Richardson*

please be seated

Go slow
if you can.
Slower.
More slowly still.
Friendly dark
or fearsome,
this is no place
to break your neck
by rushing,
by running,
by crashing into
what you cannot see.
Then again,
it is true:
different darks
have different tasks,
and if you

have arrived here unawares,
if you have come
in peril
or in pain,
this might be no place
you should dawdle.

I do not know
what these shadows
ask of you,
what they might hold
that means you good
or ill.
It is not for me
to reckon
whether you should linger
or you should leave.

But this is what
I can ask for you:

That in the darkness
there be a blessing.
That in the shadows
there be a welcome.
That in the night
you be encompassed
by the Love that knows
your name.

HYMN

Jesus Christ, Inner Light

please stand

**Jesus Christ, inner light,
Let not our own darkness conquer us.
Jesus Christ, inner light,
Enable us to welcome your love.**

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Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars

of light,
are giving off the rich
fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,

the long tapers
of cattails
are bursting and floating away over
the blue shoulders

of the ponds,
and every pond,
no matter what its
name is, is

nameless now.
Every year
everything
I have ever learned

in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side

is salvation,
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.
To live in this world

you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it

against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

THE WITCH OF ENDOR (1 SAMUEL 28:3-25)

Narrator Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. Saul had expelled the mediums and the wizards from the land. The Philistines assembled, and came and encamped at Shunem. Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. When Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, not by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then Saul said to his servants,

Saul 'Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go to her and inquire of her.'

Narrator His servants said to him,
Servants 'There is a medium at Endor.'

Narrator So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes and went there, he and two men with him. They came to the woman by night. And he said,
Saul 'Consult a spirit for me, and bring up for me the one whom I name to you.'

Narrator The woman said to him,
Witch 'Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the wizards from the land. Why then are you laying a snare for my life to bring about my death?'

Narrator But Saul swore to her by the LORD,
Saul 'As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.'

Narrator Then the woman said,
Witch 'Whom shall I bring up for you?'

Narrator He answered,
Saul 'Bring up Samuel for me.'

Narrator When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice; and the woman said to Saul,

Witch 'Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!'

Narrator The king said to her,

Saul 'Have no fear; what do you see?'

Narrator The woman said to Saul,

Witch 'I see a divine being coming up out of the ground.'

Saul 'What is his appearance?'

Witch 'An old man is coming up; he is wrapped in a robe.'

Narrator So Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance. Then Samuel said to Saul,

Samuel 'Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?'

Narrator Saul answered,

Saul 'I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams; so I have summoned you to tell me what I should do.'

Narrator Samuel said,

Samuel 'Why then do you ask me, since the LORD has turned from you and become your enemy? The LORD has done to you just as he spoke by me; for the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand, and given it to your neighbor David. Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD, and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you today. Moreover, the LORD will give Israel along with you into the hands of the Philistines; and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me; the LORD will also give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.'

Narrator Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night. The woman came to Saul, and when she saw that he was terrified, she said to him,

Witch 'Your servant has listened to you; I have taken my life in my hand, and have listened to what you have said to me. Now therefore, you also listen to your servant; let me set a morsel of bread before you. Eat, that you may have strength when you go on your way.'

Narrator He refused, and said,

Saul 'I will not eat.'

Narrator But his servants, together with the woman, urged him; and he listened to their words. So he got up from the ground and sat on the bed. Now the woman had a fatted calf in the house. She quickly slaughtered it, and she took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened cakes. She put them before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night.

PSALM 130

**1 Out of the depths have I called to you; O God, hear my voice; *
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.**

**2 If you were to note what is done amiss, *
O God, who could stand?**

**3 For there is forgiveness with you, *
therefore you shall be feared.**

**4 I wait for you, O God; my soul waits for you; *
in your word is my hope.**

**5 My soul waits for you, more than sentries for the morning, *
more than sentries for the morning.**

**6 O Israel, wait upon God, *
for with God there is mercy.**

**7 With God there is plenteous redemption; *
God shall redeem Israel from all their sins.**

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Let us pray.

Almighty and everliving God, you have made all things in your wisdom and established the boundaries of life and death: Grant that we may obey your voice in this world, and in the world to come may enjoy that rest and peace which you have appointed for your people; through Jesus Christ who is Resurrection and Life, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF JOB (41:12-34)

In this passage, a man named Job is talking to God. God tells Job that God is in charge of the whole world, the entire universe. God describes a monster called the Leviathan, the sea beast, and tells Job that as creator of the sea monster, God is more powerful than even the scariest monster.

You are invited to imagine the monster God describes and our children are encouraged to draw what they imagine.

“But I’ve more to say about Leviathan, the sea beast,
his enormous bulk, his beautiful shape.

Who would even dream of piercing that tough skin
or putting those jaws into bit and bridle?
And who would dare knock at the door of his mouth
filled with row upon row of fierce teeth?

His pride is invincible;
nothing can make a dent in that pride.

Nothing can get through that proud skin—
impervious to weapons and weather,
The thickest and toughest of hides,
impenetrable!

“He snorts and the world lights up with fire,
he blinks and the dawn breaks.

Comets pour out of his mouth,
fireworks arc and branch.

Smoke erupts from his nostrils
like steam from a boiling pot.

He blows and fires blaze;
flames of fire stream from his mouth.

All muscle he is—sheer and seamless muscle.
To meet him is to dance with death.

Sinewy and lithe,
there’s not a soft spot in his entire body—

As tough inside as out,
rock-hard, invulnerable.

Even angels run for cover when he surfaces,
cowering before his tail-thrashing turbulence.

Javelins bounce harmlessly off his hide,
harpoons ricochet wildly.
Iron bars are so much straw to him,
bronze weapons beneath notice.
Arrows don't even make him blink;
bullets make no more impression than raindrops.
A battle ax is nothing but a splinter of kindling;
he treats a brandished harpoon as a joke.
His belly is armor-plated, inexorable—
unstoppable as a barge.
He roils deep ocean the way you'd boil water,
he whips the sea like you'd whip an egg into batter.
With a luminous trail stretching out behind him,
you might think Ocean had grown a gray beard!
There's nothing on this earth quite like him,
not an ounce of fear in that creature!
He surveys all the high and mighty—
king of the ocean, king of the deep!"

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

PSALM 104:25-34

- 25 O Holy One, how manifold are your works; ***
in wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.
- 26 Yonder is the great and wide sea with its living things too many to number, ***
creatures both small and great.
- 27 There move the ships, and there is that Leviathan, ***
which you have made for the sport of it.
- 28 All of them look to you ***
to give them their food in due season.
- 29 You give it to them; they gather it; ***
you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.

**30 You hide your face, and they are terrified; *
you take away their breath, and they die and return to their dust.**

**31 You send forth your Spirit, and they are created; *
and so you renew the face of the earth.**

**32 May the glory of God endure for ever; *
may the Holy One rejoice in all creation.**

**33 God looks at the earth and it trembles; *
God touches the mountains and they smoke.**

**34 I will sing to God as long as I live; *
I will praise my God while I have my being.**

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Let us pray,

Creator God, when you fashioned the world the morning stars sang together and the host of heaven shouted for joy; you vanquish the monsters of our lives, both real and imagined, open our eyes to your presence and power in times of fear and joy alike. **Amen.**

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES (EZEKIEL 37:1-14)

Narrator The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. The Lord led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. The Lord said to me,
The Lord ‘Mortal, can these bones live?’
Narrator I answered, ‘O Lord God, you know.’ Then the Lord said to me,
The Lord ‘Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.’
Narrator So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had

covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then the Lord said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.'

Narrator I prophesied as the Lord commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. Then the Lord said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.'

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

BLESSING OF HOPE—*Jan Richardson*

So may we know
the hope
that is not just
for someday
but for this day—
here, now,
in this moment
that opens to us:

hope not made
of wishes
but of substance,

hope made of sinew
and muscle
and bone,

hope that has breath
and a beating heart,

hope that will not
keep quiet
and be polite,

hope that knows
how to holler
when it is called for,
hope that knows
how to sing
when there seems
little cause,

hope that raises us
from the dead—

not someday
but this day,
every day,
again and
again and
again.

Let us pray.

O God, you have called your people to your service from age to age. Do not give us over to death, but raise us up to serve you, to praise you, and to glorify your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FOR DEATH—*John O'Donohue*

From the moment you were born,
your death has walked beside you.
Though it seldom shows its face,
you still feel its empty touch
when fear invades your life,

or what you love is lost
or inner damage is incurred...

Yet when destiny draws you
into these spaces of poverty,
and your heart stays generous
until some door opens into the light,
you are quietly befriending your death;
so that you will have no need to fear
when your time comes to turn and leave,

that the silent presence of your death
would call your life to attention,
wake you up to how scarce your time is
and to the urgency to become free
and equal to the call of your destiny.

That you would gather yourself
and decide carefully
how you now can live
the life you would love
to look back on
from your deathbed.

HOMILY

The Rev. Christy Laborda Harris

A period of silent reflection follows the homily

HYMN

Through the Mystery of Death

please stand

**Through the mystery of death,
In the mystery of life,
Walk with us, Christ Jesus.**

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OPENING ANTHEM FROM "THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD: RITE II" (BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER)

**I am Resurrection and I am Life, says the Lord.
Whoever has faith in me shall have life,
even though he die.
And everyone who has life,
and has committed himself to me in faith,
shall not die for ever.**

(John 11: 25-26)

**As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives
and that at the last he will stand upon the earth.
After my awaking, he will raise me up;
and in my body I shall see God.
I myself shall see, and my eyes behold him
who is my friend and not a stranger.**

(Job 19: 25-28)

**For none of us has life in himself,
and none becomes his own master when he dies.
For if we have life, we are alive in the Lord,
and if we die, we die in the Lord.
So, then, whether we live or die,
we are the Lord's possession.**

(Romans 14:7-9)

**Happy from now on
are those who die in the Lord!
So it is, says the Spirit,
for they rest from their labors.**

(Revelation 14:13)

Let us pray.

You, O Lord, have made us from the dust of the earth and to dust our bodies shall return; yet you have also breathed your Spirit upon us and called us to new life in you: Have mercy upon us, now and at the hour of our death; through Jesus Christ, our mediator and advocate. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE—*The Church of England*

Let us pray to the Lord, who has conquered death.

Jesus, bread from heaven,
you satisfy the hungry with good things:
grant us a share with all the faithful departed
in the banquet of your kingdom.

Hear us, risen Lord,

our resurrection and our life.

Jesus, the light of the world,
you gave the man born blind the gift of sight:
open the eye of faith
and bring us from darkness
to your eternal light and glory.

We pray for all those in need, especially...

Hear us, risen Lord,

our resurrection and our life.

Jesus, Son of the living God,
you summoned your friend Lazarus from death to life:
raise us at the last to full and eternal life with you.

We remember those who have died, especially...

Hear us, risen Lord,

our resurrection and our life.

Jesus, crucified Saviour,
in your dying you entrusted each to the other,
Mary your mother and John your beloved disciple:
sustain and comfort all who mourn.

Hear us, risen Lord,

our resurrection and our life.

Jesus, our way and truth and life,
you drew your disciple Thomas from doubt to faith:
reveal the resurrection faith to the doubting and the lost.

Hear us, risen Lord,

our resurrection and our life.

May God in God's infinite love and mercy
bring the whole Church,
living and departed in the Lord Jesus,
to a joyful resurrection
and the fulfilment of God's eternal kingdom. **Amen.**

As Jesus taught, we now pray.

**Holy One, our only Home,
hallowed be your name.
May your day dawn,
your will be done,
here as in heaven.
Feed us today,
and forgive us as we forgive each other.
Do not forsake us at the test,
but deliver us from evil.
For the glory, the power,
and the mercy are yours,
now and 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.**

Martha Blacklock, Mother Thunder Mission

Let us pray.

Lord of heaven's reach, of earth reborn; you call us from starless graves to sing under infinite skies: we praise your name for those who have walked this way unheralded and unnumbered but known to you, their beginning, their end, their joy in life; give us the same grace to be unbound and take the step of faith; through Jesus Christ, the alpha and omega. **Amen.**

BLESSING

God the Father,
by whose love Christ was raised from the dead,
open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life. **Amen.**

God the Son,
who in bursting the grave has won a glorious victory,
give you joy as you share the Easter faith. **Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit,
whom the risen Lord breathed into his disciples,
empower you and fill you with Christ's peace. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty be upon you and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

Neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Alleluia.
Alleluia.

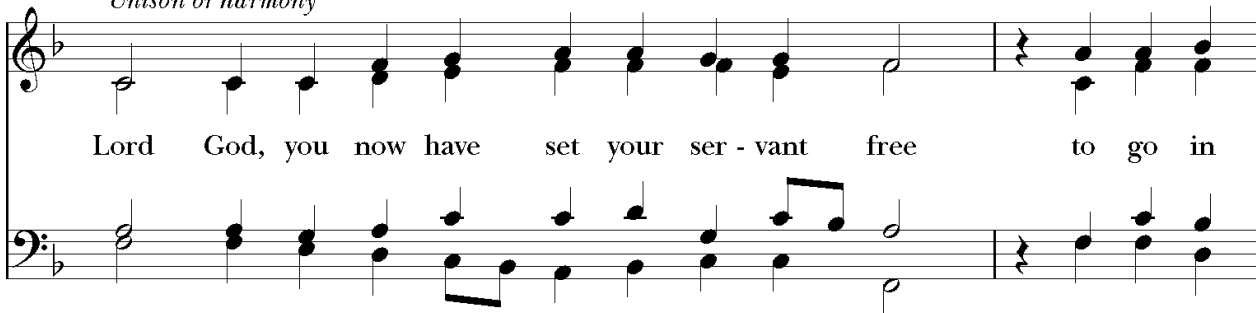
Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.

RECESSIONAL HYMN

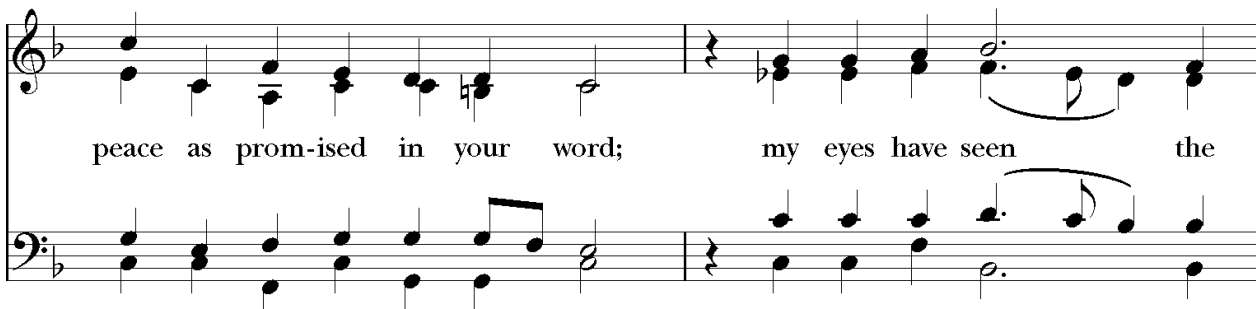
Lord God, you now have set your servant free
(please see next page)

please stand

Unison or harmony



Lord God, you now have set your ser - vant free to go in



peace as prom-ised in your word; my eyes have seen the

Sa - vior, Christ the Lord, pre-pared by you for all the

world to see, to shine on na - tions trapped in dark - est night,

the glo - ry of your peo - ple, and their light.

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