

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church June 16, 2024
*Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.
Be the living expression of God's kindness. —Mother Teresa*
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

The service begins on page 355 in the Book of Common Prayer

Prelude: Raise your voices, vales and mountains

William Schultes

Processional: The God of Abraham praise

Hymnal # 401

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit **and blessed be His kingdom, now and forever**

Collect for Purity *in unison*

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.**

Hymn of Praise Morning has broken

Hymnal #8

The Collect of the day

The Lord be with you... **and also with you.**

Keep, O Lord, your household the Church in your steadfast faith and love, that through your grace we may proclaim your truth with boldness, and minister your justice with compassion; for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Introduction to the Lessons *The mustard seed becomes a great shrub that shelters the birds, recalling ancient images of the tree of life. We would expect a cedar or a sequoia, but Jesus finds the power of God better imaged in a tiny, no-account seed. It is not the way we expect divine activity to look. Yet the tree of life is here, in the cross around which we gather, the tree into which we are grafted through baptism, the true vine that nourishes us with its fruit in the cup we share. It may not appear all that impressive, but while nobody is looking it grows with a power beyond our understanding.*

First Reading: Ezekiel 17:22-24

Tree imagery is used in a messianic prophecy to tell how the LORD will choose someone from Judah's royal family (the cedar tree) to reign over all creation. This tree will be planted on Mount Zion, the location of the holy temple.

²²Thus says the Lord GOD:

I myself will take a sprig
from the lofty top of a cedar;
I will set it out.
I will break off a tender one
from the topmost of its young twigs;
I myself will plant it
on a high and lofty mountain.

²³On the mountain height of Israel

I will plant it,
in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit,
and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live;
in the shade of its branches will nest
winged creatures of every kind.

²⁴All the trees of the field shall know
that I am the LORD.

I bring low the high tree,
I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree
and make the dry tree flourish.

I the LORD have spoken;
I will accomplish it.

The Word of the Lord....**thanks be to God.**

Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15 *Bonum est confiteri* (*it is good to acknowledge*)

- 1 It is a good thing to give thanks to the LORD, *
and to sing praises to your Name, O Most High;
- 2 To tell of your loving-kindness early in the morning *
and of your faithfulness in the night season;
- 3 On the psaltery, and on the lyre, *
and to the melody of the harp.
- 4 For you have made me glad by your acts, O LORD; *
and I shout for joy because of the works of your hands.
- 12 Those who are planted in the house of the LORD *
shall flourish in the courts of our God;
- 13 They shall still bear fruit in old age; *
they shall be green and succulent;
- 14 That they may show how upright the LORD is, *
my Rock, in whom there is no fault.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 [11-13] 14-17

Paul encourages believers to live by faith and not by sight. We do not consider Jesus from a human perspective but through the eyes of faith, believing he died for all and was raised. All who are in Christ are now in God's new creation.

⁶So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

[¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. ¹²We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. ¹³For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.] ¹⁴For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has

died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

The Word of the Lord...**thanks be to God**

Gospel: Mark 4:26-34

Jesus frequently uses parables to teach ordinary people as they are able to hear and understand. Images of sowing and growing show the vitality of God's kingdom.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark.....**Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

²⁶[Jesus] said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground,²⁷and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

³⁰He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

³³With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

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

The Sermon

The Nicene Creed *in unison*

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
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 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.

Prayers of the People Form III

The Leader and People pray responsively

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church; **That we all may be one.**

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;
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;
That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake; **That our works may find favor in your sight.**

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;
That they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed eternal rest. **Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;
May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

Silence *The People may add their own petitions.*

Bless all fathers and all men who have acted as fathers to others. As they care for their families, give them strength and wisdom, tenderness and patience; support them in the work they have to do, protecting and guiding those who look to them, as we look to you for love and salvation. We ask this through Jesus Christ.

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect: Almighty and eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth: Mercifully accept the prayers of your people, and strengthen us to do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Confession of Sin

The Deacon or Celebrant says: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Minister 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 Bishop, when present, or the Priest, 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. **Amen.**

The Peace & Announcements

Please stand as the bread and wine are brought forth and again as the doxology is sung

Offertory Musette

J.S. Bach

The Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise Him all creatures here below; praise Him above the heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen

The Holy Communion Eucharistic Prayer A

The Celebrant, whether bishop or priest, faces them and sings or says

The Lord 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 him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere 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:

The Sanctus is sung

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: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

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. *AMEN.*

As now as our Savior has taught us, we now pray:

**Our Father, who 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Fraction
Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The invitation to communion:
The gifts of God for the people of God: come, Jesus invites you to meet Him here.

All Baptized believers are invited to receive communion.

After communion:

The post communion prayer of the gathered: Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

The Final Blessing

Recessional: O Zion, haste

Hymnal #539

Dismissal

Postlude God of Grace and God of Glory

John Hughes

NOTES:

Fellowship Lunch is this Thursday, June 20, noon, at Fruits of Labor. It is an easy walk if you want to park at the church and walk with Mother Susan and Parr.

Going Deeper is an ongoing series of Christian study at St. Luke, each Wednesday, 6-7 (fellowship begins at 5:30 with a bag dinner). Our topic for the next few months is the study of the books that were not selected to be in the Bible. It is one of The Great Courses, and is a short video lecture with discussions following.

Thank you to Ben Terry for his work on the flower beds in the front of the church!
Thank you to Ann Lilly for the Mother's Day & Father's Day goodies!