



# CELTIC EVENSONG AND COMMUNION

at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

The Baptism of our Lord ☩ January 11, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

*Welcome to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. We welcome and include all people without exception and invite you to participate fully in worship and after the service to enjoy the community supper in the fellowship hall.*

*Throughout this bulletin, helpful guidance is printed in italics. Nursery care is available (infant-4); speak with a door greeter. Visitor Guides are found at entrances. When you want to be known here, place a Welcome card (in all pews, or submit online) in the basket in the center aisle. The church is open for prayer from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Thursday.*

*From 5:10 on Sundays, the church is ready for prayer and rest. Please observe silence inside the church and thank you for remembering to "silence" all devices.*

**Prelude** Remembering the light

Kevin Kern

*Please stand at the sound of the bell, as you are able.*

**Opening** The Second Music

Annie Lighthart

Now I understand that there are two melodies playing,  
one below the other, one easier to hear, the other  
lower, steady, perhaps more faithful for being less heard  
yet always present.

When all other things seem lively and real,  
this one fades. Yet the notes of it

touch as gently as fingertips, as the sound  
of the names laid over each child at birth.

I want to stay in that music without striving or cover.

If the truth of our lives is what it is playing,

the telling is so soft

that this mortal time, this irrevocable change,

becomes beautiful. I stop and stop again

to hear the second music.

I hear the children in the yard, a train, then birds.

All this is in it and will be gone. I set my ear to it as I would to a heart.

*Silence is held after the reading.*

**Hymn**

O gracious Light, Lord Jesus Christ

*Sung by all, standing as able.**Conditor alme siderum*

1. O gra - cious Light, Lord Je - sus Christ, in  
 2. Now sun - set comes, but light shines forth, the  
 3. Wor - thy are you of end - less praise; O

you the Fa - ther's glo - ry shone. Im - mor - tal, ho - ly,  
 lamps are lit to pierce the night. Praise Fa - ther, Son, and  
 Son of God, life - giv - ing Lord; where - fore you are through

blest is he, and blest are you, his ho - ly Son.  
 Spi - rit: God who dwells in the e - ter - nal light.  
 all the earth and in the high - est heav'n a - dored.

**A Prayer for the Evening**

Gracious God,  
 You have given us much today;  
 grant us also a thankful spirit.  
 Into your hands we commend ourselves  
 and those we love.  
 Be with us still, and when we take our rest,  
 renew us for the service of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**The Reading** Matthew 3:13-17 *Please sit.**Reader* A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

*Silence is held for one minute of reflection.***Reflection** Linda Wentz*Silence is held for two minutes of reflection.***Music for Meditation** The lark in the morn

trad. English, arr. Doreen Smith

**Prayers for Ourselves and Others** *Please stand.**Deacon* Let us pray for ourselves and the world.*Leader* Loving God, enliven the Church for its mission,*People* **That we may be salt of the earth and light to the world.***Leader* Breathe fresh life into your people.*People* **Give us power to reveal Christ in our daily lives.**

Leader Creator of all, lead us into your ways of justice and peace,  
 People **That we may respect one another in freedom and truth.**

Leader Awaken in us a sense of wonder for the earth and all that is in it.  
 People **Teach us to care creatively for this fragile world.**

Leader God of truth, inspire with your wisdom those whose decisions affect the lives of others.  
 People **That all may live with integrity and courage.**

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

Leader Receive the gratitude of our hearts, [especially \_\_\_\_].

*The people may add their intercessions either silently or aloud.*

Leader Open our hearts with compassion to suffering throughout the world, for the earth's plants, animal and ecosystems, and all who bear the wounds of human violence, indifference, abuse, conflict, and aggression.

*The people may add their intercessions either silently or aloud.*

Leader We pray for our losses, for those who mourn, and for those who have died, [especially \_\_\_\_].

*The people may add their intercessions either silently or aloud.*

Leader Lord, you have called us to serve you.

People **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.**

**Candle Lighting, Additional Prayers**

*Lighting candles is as potent a symbol of offering one's prayer to God as candlelight is of God's abiding presence. All may light a votive at any station, now and hereafter. This Church is open daily for prayer and rest, and a permanent votive station is located near the piano in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit.*

**Music for Meditation** Flow gently, sweet Afton trad. Scottish, arr. Sunita Staneslow

**Hymn** Bless the Lord, my soul Jacques Berthier

*The refrain will be repeated several times as the cantor sings the verses.*

Musical notation for the first line of the hymn. It consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in 4/4 time and G major. The melody is in the treble clef. The lyrics are: "Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's ho - ly name." The music features a simple, hymn-like melody with a steady bass accompaniment.

Musical notation for the second line of the hymn. It consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in 4/4 time and G major. The melody is in the treble clef. The lyrics are: "Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me in - to life." The music continues the simple, hymn-like melody from the first line.

## Blessing of Oil for Healing Ministries

*Deacon* To Jesus came the untouchable sick, sinners and outcasts, foreigners and foes alike;

*All* **He touched and healed, welcomed and forgave. Jesus loved them all.**

*Deacon* Jesus receives all who seek God's loving mercy.

*All* **We come to Jesus in our need, bringing with us the needs of the world.**

*Deacon* Spirit of God, come upon this oil and upon all who seek the anointing of your healing; pour upon them the gift of your wholeness and the healing of your love, in the holy name of Christ. **Amen.**

**The Grace** Now my friends, all that is true, all that is noble, all that is just and pure, all that is lovable and gracious, whatever is excellent and admirable; with these let us fill our hearts, and the God of heaven will be with us. **Amen.**

**The Peace** May Christ, the Good Shepherd, bind us with a bond of love that cannot be broken. The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

*All greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying "peace."*

## Welcome and Announcements

### The Holy Communion

*All comes from God, so from all God has given into our care, we offer gifts from our gratitude. Please place offerings into the basket near the baptismal font or food pantry items into the baskets by the main entrance, or make a gift online by scanning the QR code or texting STSTEPHENSVA to 73256.*



**At the Offertory** Wade in de water

trad. spiritual, arr. Harry T. Burleigh

**The Great Thanksgiving**

*Please stand.*

Canon G

*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 God thanks and praise.**

*Celebrant* O God of mystery and promise, you invite us to discover you in the intimate places of ourselves and our lives. You invite us to discover you within the complexities of our humanity, in passionate and tender loving, in struggle and pain, in confusion and unknowing, in flashes of insight and wisdom. You also call us beyond ourselves to places of imagination, beyond the silent stars, in the deep rhythms of the ocean, in the unending cycles of day and night, seasons of life and death.

With saints and ancestors, with the seas and earth and sky, with animals and birds, with our friends and those unknown to us, with all creation we join in the song of your unending glory:

## Sanctus

Sung by all.

Land of Rest

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry, Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est, Ho - san - na in the high - est.

**Celebrant** We praise you that in Jesus you make known to us the wonder and richness of our humanity. We give thanks for his life-giving love, for his healing touch, for his vulnerability and for his gentleness.

Before he gave up his life, he shared his humanity, his flesh and blood with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks for it, broke it and gave it to them saying:

**All** **“This is my own body given for you. Do this to remember me.”**

**Celebrant** So too after they had eaten, he took wine, gave thanks for it and gave it to them saying:

**All** **“This is my blood, poured out in love for you. Do this to remember me.”**

**Celebrant** So we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

**Celebrant** Come now, Spirit of God, bless these holy gifts, and as we eat and drink these bodily things, make us one body, food for the world, one blood to be poured out for the life of all. Touch us with your gentle creativity and fire us with longing for the new age of justice and peace.

We ask this through Jesus who gave his body that we might be one and his blood that we might find new life. With him, and through him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, be to you, O God, all honor and glory forever. **AMEN.**

## The Lord's Prayer

**Cantor**  
As our Sa - vior Christ has taught us, we now pray,  
**All**  
Our Fa - ther in hea - ven, hal - lowed be your Name,

your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in hea - ven.  
 Give us to - day our dai - ly bread.  
 For - give us our sins as we for - give those who sin a - gainst us.  
 Save us from the time of tri - al, and de - liv - er us from e - vil.  
 For the king - dom, the power, and the glo - ry are yours,  
 now and for ev - er. A - men.

**The Breaking of the Bread**

*The Celebrant breaks the bread. A period of silence is held.*

*Sung by all.*

Christopher Walker

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sins of the world: have  
 mer-cy on us, mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the  
 sins of the world: have mer-cy on us, mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you  
 take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace, grant us peace.

**The Invitation**

*Celebrant*

This is the 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.

**At the Communion of the People**

**All who seek God's presence through Communion or God's blessing are welcome to come forward.** Extend your hands, one upon another, to receive a bread wafer (request gluten-free) or, to receive God's blessing instead, cross your arms over your chest in an "X". Wine for sipping is offered next to the bread or dip the edge of your wafer in the small cup by the pillars. **Healing prayer and anointing** are offered to all at the side chapels from the beginning of Communion through the end of the service. More information is found at the end of this bulletin.

**Music for Communion** Like the murmur of the dove's song  
Deep River  
Waterways

Peter Cutts, arr. Mark Sedio  
trad. spiritual, arr. Michael Simpson  
Ludovico Einaudi

**After Communion** Please stand.

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

*All* **God of abundance,  
you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of salvation;  
you have united us with Christ and one another;  
and you have made us one with all your people  
in heaven and on earth.  
Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit,  
that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world  
and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

### The Blessing

*Celebrant* May the stillness of God be yours this night,  
that you may sleep in peace.  
May the awareness of the angels be yours this night,  
that you may be alert to unseen mysteries.  
And may the life of Christ be yours this night,  
that you may be truly alive and kindled to love.  
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

### Hymn

Brightest and best

*Sung by all.*

*Morning Star*



1. Bright - est and best of the stars— of the morn - ing,  
2. Shall we then yield him, in cost - ly de - vo - tion,  
3. Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple o - bla - tion,



dawn on our dark - ness, and lend— us thine aid;  
o - dors of E - dom, and of - ferings di - vine,  
vain - ly with gifts would his fa - vor se - cure,



star of the east, the hor - i - zon a - dorn - ing,  
gems of the moun - tain, and pearls— of the o - cean,  
rich - er by far is the heart's a - dor - a - tion,



guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.  
myrrh from the for - est, and gold— from the mine?  
dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor.

## Dismissal

**Deacon** Go out into the world in peace, have courage, hold on to what is good, return no one evil for evil, strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the suffering, honor everyone, love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

**People** **Thanks be to God.** *Please sit for the Music for Meditation.*

**Music for Meditation** Afton Water trad. Scottish, arr. Doreen Smith

**Postlude** *Buachaill ó'n Éirne* (Come by the hills) trad. Irish, arr. Phil Coulter

*During the postlude, you are welcome to remain to rest or pray, or to depart in silence.*

## Participants

**Celebrant:** The Rev. Will Stanley; **Deacon:** The Rev. John Jenkins; **Reflector:** Linda Wentz; **Subdeacon:** Susan Wilkes; **Reader:** Ed Lynch; **Intercessor:** Angela DeVaun; **Chalice Bearers:** Howard Anderson, Lisa Cuseo-Ott, Sam Davis, Cary Wyatt; **Musicians:** Matt Hassmer, *cantor*; David Garcia, *oboe*; Diana Chou, *piano*

## The Ministry of Healing Prayer at St. Stephen's Church

TO PRESENT YOURSELF FOR HEALING PRAYER OR ANOINTING: Healing ministers are located in both side chapels from the time people receive communion until after the service concludes. Go to either side chapel either after receiving communion or a blessing, or at any time following irrespective of what else is happening in the service. Because these ministries will continue through the end of the service, please respect those in prayer by exiting in silence from any of the rear doors. Whether or not you participate in these ministries tonight, you may contribute to the work of healing prayer by offering your personal prayers for yourself and that all who worship here may experience the healing love of God in their lives and bear that love into the world for its healing.

HEALING PRAYER: If you wish to sit for a moment with a healing prayer minister, it is helpful if you share your name and the concern for which you ask God's healing. The minister will lay hands on your shoulders, join with you in silently opening ourselves to God, and offering your prayer concern to the healing One who is with us always. This is not a ministry of magical incantations. It is simply about fellow pilgrims opening ourselves more completely to God's presence and healing love.

ANOINTING: If you wish to receive anointing with healing oil, approach the anointer with you palms open and extended. She or he will mark your hand with the sign of the cross and offer a simple prayer for your healing.

Healing ministries of prayer and anointing have been practiced by Christians from the very beginning. God's grace is freely given to all people for the healing of spirit, mind, and body, and these practices provide ways for us to present ourselves just as we are with open hands and open hearts. We do not believe in magical incantations. Instead, these sacramental acts are simply about fellow pilgrims opening ourselves more completely to the healing love of God.

## The Parish Prayer List

Copies of the parish prayer list are available at Information Central (the large table outside the parish office) and in the narthex (the vestibule inside the Three Chopt Road entrance to the church). To add someone to the prayer list, please contact Kitty Ball in the parish office, [kball@ststephensRVA.org](mailto:kball@ststephensRVA.org).

Prayers and blessings adapted from the following sources: The Northumbria Community, *Celtic Daily Prayer: Prayers and Readings from the Northumbria Community*, Harper Collins, © 2002; *Intercessions for the Christian People*, The Liturgical Press, ©1990; *A New Zealand Prayer Book*, Harper Collins, © 1997; Philip Newell, *Celtic Benediction: Morning and Night Prayer*, William B. Eardmans Publishing Company, © 2000; Iona Community, *Iona Community Worship Book*. Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, © 2017; Wild Goose Worship Group, *Big Book of Liturgies*, Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, © 2023. Rite Planning, © 2021, by Church Publishing Incorporated, all rights reserved, used by permission. All copyrighted music by permission, under OneLicense #A710911. Opening: "The Second Music" by Annie Lighthart from *Iron String* © Airlie Press, 2015. [airliepress.org](http://airliepress.org) Reprinted with permission.

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