



Palmer Hall Chapel

Sunday, September 27, 2026 at 9 a.m. ☩ The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Baptism
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church ☩ Richmond, Virginia

Welcome to the Palmer Hall service

We are delighted you are here. Wherever you might be on your faith journey, we hope your experience here will strengthen and affirm you. We are sure that your presence among us today strengthens others, and we welcome you to join in everything that St. Stephen's offers. Every Sunday, we offer several different services of worship (at 8, 9 and 11:15 a.m., and 5:30 and 8 p.m.), each with its own character. At 9 a.m., two services are happening simultaneously—one in the main church, and this one which takes place in Palmer Hall Chapel.

The Palmer Hall service for some feels especially welcoming to families, particularly those with babies and children. Both of the 9 a.m. services—this one, and the one in the main church—include important roles for children, and people of all ages are welcome at any service. In Palmer Hall, our worship space includes a “soft space.” This is an area with a rug, floor cushions, and children's books where children can move a bit more freely and comfortably than they can in rows of seating. Please accompany your child to the soft space if and when they want to visit it; this helps us ensure the safety and comfort of our whole community.

Both of the 9 a.m. services include Holy Eucharist. All are welcome at the altar in this place. To receive Communion, place your hands together, palms up. You may consume the bread and then drink from the wine in the larger chalice. If you prefer to intinct, touching the edge of the bread to the wine, please use one of the smaller cups. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. If you prefer to receive a blessing, cross your arms on the front of your chest. Children who have been baptized are welcome to receive communion. The important thing is that you know God welcomes you and that this church welcomes you. Please come back often.

Prelude

Welcome

The Word of God

Opening Hymn Be still and know *Sung by all, standing, several times.* *Be still and know*



Opening Prayer

Leader This is the day that the Lord has made.
People **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Let us pray. *Silence is kept.*

Prayer Book, page 234

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Reading Exodus 17:1-7

Reader A reading from the Book of Exodus.

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel Song Celtic Alleluia

Fintan O'Carroll

Sung twice by all, standing, before and after the Gospel.



The Gospel Matthew 21:23-32

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

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

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."

Reader The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Wondering Mary Via, St. Catherine's Lower School Chaplain

The children are invited to gather on the center rug.

Celebrant The Candidates for Holy Baptism will now be presented.

Parents and Godparents of the Candidates

I present James Kevin Lambert to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

I present Stella Grace Cottrell to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

I present Edward Cosby Gottwald to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

Question Will you be responsible for seeing that the child you present is brought up in the Christian faith and life?

Answer I will, with God's help.

Question Will you by your prayers and witness help these children to grow into the full stature of Christ?

Answer I will, with God's help.

Question Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?

Answer I renounce them.

Question Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

Answer I renounce them.

Question Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

Answer I renounce them.

Question Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?

Answer I do.

Question Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?

Answer I do.

Question Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?

Answer I do. *All stand.*

The Celebrant invites the congregation to stand and addresses them, saying

Celebrant Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?

People **We will.**

Celebrant Let us renew our own baptismal covenant, remembering the commitment to Christ made in baptism.

The Baptismal Covenant *Remain standing.*

Prayer Book, page 304

Celebrant Do you believe in God the Father?

People **I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Celebrant Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

People **I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

Celebrant Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

People **I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Celebrant Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?
 People **I will, with God's help.**
 Celebrant Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
 People **I will, with God's help.**
 Celebrant Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?
 People **I will, with God's help.**
 Celebrant Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?
 People **I will, with God's help.**
 Celebrant Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?
 People **I will, with God's help.**

Prayers for the Candidates

Prayer Book, page 305

Leader Let us now pray for these persons who are to receive the Sacrament of new birth.
 Leader Deliver them, O Lord, from the way of sin and death.
 People **Lord, hear our prayer.**
 Leader Open their hearts to your grace and truth.
 People **Lord, hear our prayer.**
 Leader Fill them with your holy and life-giving Spirit.
 People **Lord, hear our prayer.**
 Leader Keep them in the faith and communion of your holy Church.
 People **Lord, hear our prayer.**
 Leader Teach them to love others in the power of the Spirit.
 People **Lord, hear our prayer.**
 Leader Send them into the world in witness to your love.
 People **Lord, hear our prayer.**
 Leader Bring them to the fullness of your peace and glory.
 People **Lord, hear our prayer.**
 Leader Grant, O Lord, that all who are baptized into the death of Christ by water and the Spirit, may live reborn in the freedom and power of his resurrection, and so we offer thanks for the blessings of life, [especially for _____], and we commend to you those who have died [remembering especially _____]; with all the saints we offer our prayers, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Children are invited to come forward to the font for the baptism.

Thanksgiving over the Water

Please remain standing and face the font.

Prayer Book, page 306

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
 People **And also with you.**
 Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
 People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**
 Celebrant We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life. We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

At the following words, the Celebrant touches the water.

Now sanctify this water, we pray you, by the power of your Holy Spirit, that those who here are cleansed from sin and born again may continue for ever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Savior. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Baptism

Prayer Book, page 307

Each candidate is presented by name to the Celebrant, who then pours water upon the candidate, saying

*N., I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.***

A priest then anoints the newly baptized with oil, saying

*N., you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever. **Amen.***

Celebrant Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon these your servants the forgiveness of sin, and have raised them to the new life of grace. Sustain them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. **Amen.**

Celebrant Let us welcome the newly baptized.

All **We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood.**

The Peace

Prayer Book, page 360

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The Ministers and People greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Birthday Blessing

Prayer Book, page 830

All **O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Announcements

The Holy Communion

Offertory Sentence

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:2

All comes from God, so from what God has given, we offer gifts as we participate in God's work in the world. You may offer your gift online (use the QR code, or text STSTEPHENS RVA to 73256), or in the offering plates as they come by.



Offertory Music

At the Presentation

Sung by all, standing.

Old 100th



The children are invited to follow the ushers forward to sit on the rug in front of the altar for the Great Thanksgiving.

The Great Thanksgiving

Common Worship, Prayer 2

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.

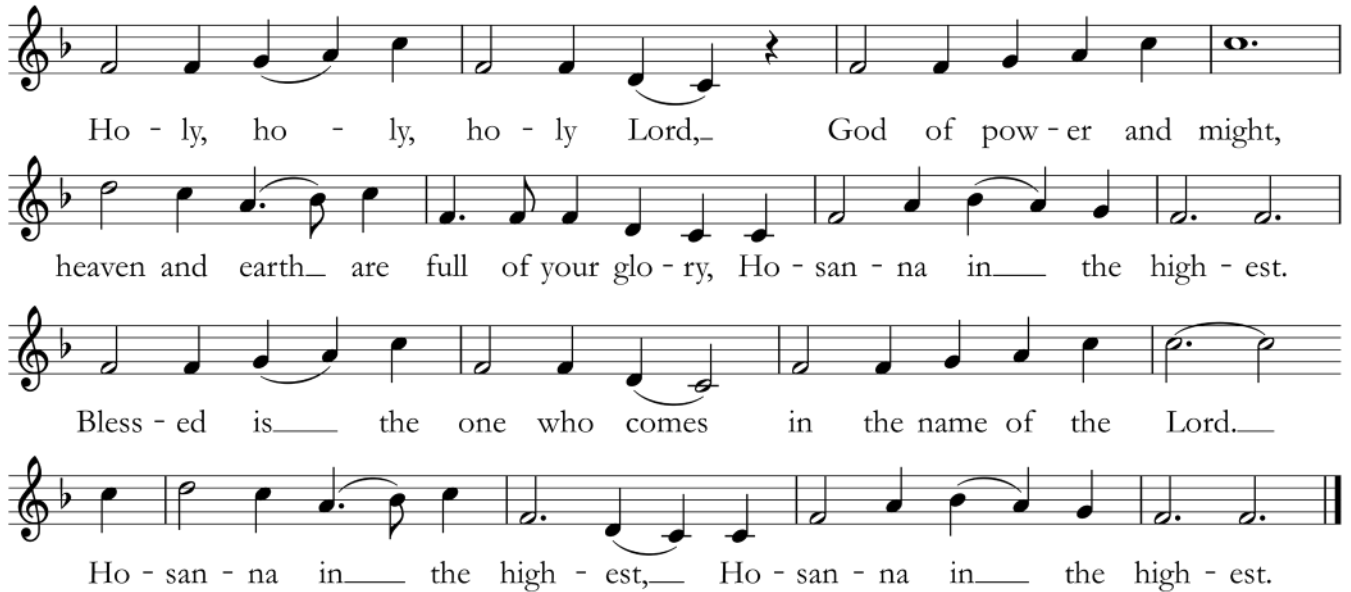
People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Celebrant Lord of all life, you created the universe, where all living things reflect your glory. You give us happy times and things to celebrate. In these we taste your kingdom, a feast for all your children. You made us all, each wonderfully different, to join with the angels and sing your praise:

Sanctus

Sung by all.

Land of Rest



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
heaven 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 thank you, loving Father, because, when we turned away, you sent Jesus, your Son. He gave his life for us on the cross and shows us the way to live. Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying: 'This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying: 'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.'

So Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life. As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit, and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Savior.

Help us, Father, to love one another, as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended, and all creation is gathered in your loving arms. And now with blessed Stephen, Mary, Mother of God, and all your saints we give you glory, through Jesus Christ, in the strength of the Spirit, today and for ever. **AMEN.**

Celebrant And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Celebrant and People

Prayer Book, page 364

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,

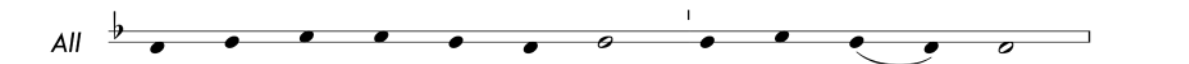
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated bread. A period of silence is kept.

Mason Martens, S-152

Cantor 
Al - le - lu - ia. Christ our Pass - o - ver is sac - ri - ficed for us;

All 
There-fore let us keep the feast. Al - le - lu - ia.

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

Communion will be served at two stations, standing. All are welcome to come forward. To receive Communion, place your hands together, palms up. If you would like a gluten-free wafer, please tell the minister. If you prefer a blessing, please cross your arms on the front of your chest.

After Communion, the Celebrant says

Let us pray. Please stand.

All **Loving God, we give you thanks for restoring us in your image
and nourishing us with spiritual food in the sacrament of Christ's body and blood.
Now send us forth a people, forgiven, healed, renewed; that we may proclaim your love to the world
and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

The Blessing Song Go now in peace *Sung by all, standing.*

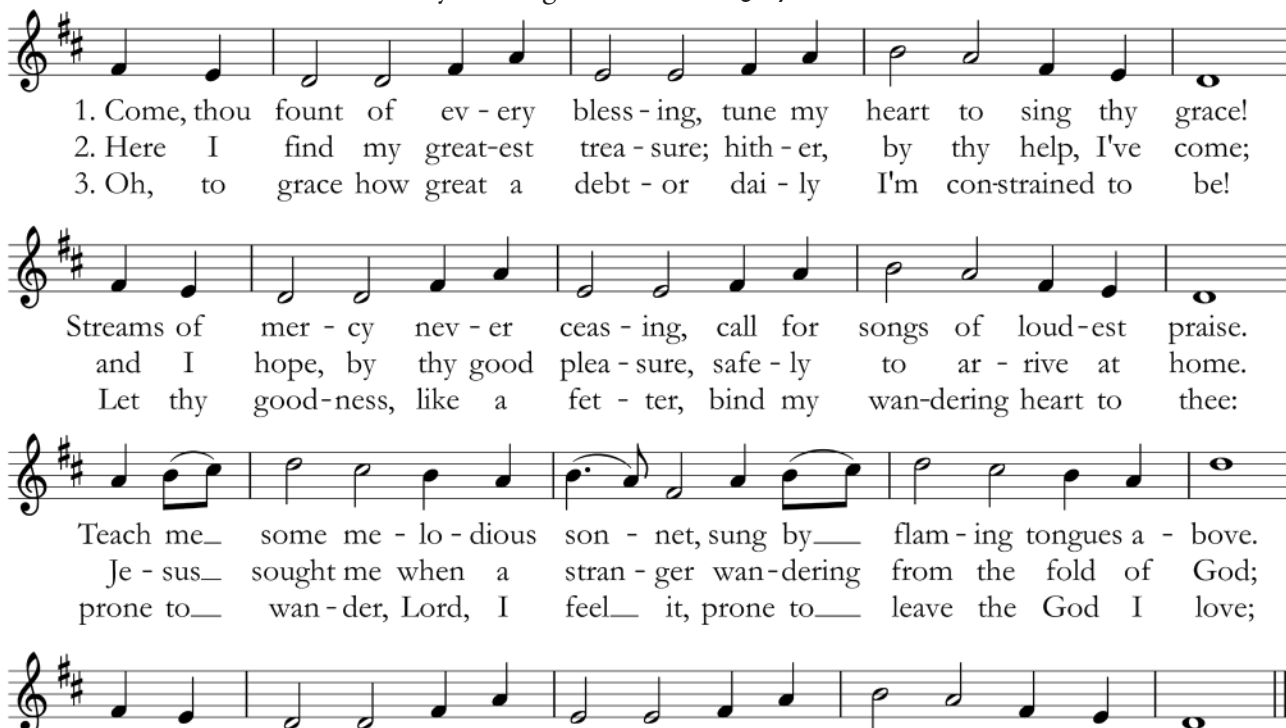
Natalie Sleeth

Go now in peace, go now in peace.

**May the love of God surround you,
everywhere, everywhere you may go.**

Hymn 686 Come, thou fount of every blessing *Sung by all.*

Nettleton



1. Come, thou fount of ev - ery bless - ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace!
2. Here I find my great - est trea - sure; hith - er, by thy help, I've come;
3. Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con - strained to be!

Streams of mer - cy nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.
and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
Let thy good - ness, like a fet - ter, bind my wan - dering heart to thee:

Teach me some me - lo - dious son - net, sung by flam - ing tongues a - bove.
Je - sus sought me when a stran - ger wan - dering from the fold of God;
prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;

Praise the mount! Oh, fix me on it, mount of God's un - chang - ing love.
he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.
here's my heart, oh, take and seal it, seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Dismissal

Prayer Book, page 366

Leader Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude



Participants

CELEBRANT: The Rev. Cate Anthony

ASSISTING: Caroline Harris

WONDERER: Mary Via

MUSICIAN: Judy Fiske, *piano*

Presented for Holy Baptism

James Kevin Lambert, child of Thornton Beale Lambert and Matthew Taylor Lambert

Stella Grace Cottrell, child of Amy Grace Cottrell and Robert Stuart Cottrell II

Edward Cosby Gottwald, child of Annie Cosby Gottwald and Bruce Cobb Gottwald III

The Parish Prayer List

Copies of the parish prayer list are available at Information Central outside the parish office.



Reflection Questions

In this week's Gospel, Jesus talks with religious leaders who wonder if Jesus' authority is real. In response, Jesus tells another parable (a story that helps us learn what the kingdom of God is like). A father asked his sons to work in his vineyard. The first son refused but later changed his mind and worked. The second son agreed but did not go to work. Out of the two sons, the son who changed his mind did what his father asked.

Here are some questions for further discussion with your family:

- Share about a time when you changed your mind and made a better choice. What happened?
- It's ok to change your mind, but sometimes it can be embarrassing or scary. What helps you feel brave to change your mind?
- The Gospel talks about Jesus' authority, or his power to speak in God's name. Where do you think Jesus' authority comes from?

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