

**A Service of Thanksgiving
for the Life of
Ellen Ferraro Thompson**

May 14, 1935 – August 21, 2026



Monday, September 28, 2026

Two o'clock

**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Richmond, Virginia**

Greetings and welcome to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

The Episcopal liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy. It finds all its meaning in the resurrection. Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we, too, shall be raised.

The liturgy, therefore, is characterized by joy, in the certainty that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Thus, the color for the altar hangings and vestments is white, the color of Easter and celebration of new life.

This joy, however, does not make human grief unchristian or unacknowledged. The very love we have for each other in Christ brings deep sorrow when we are parted by death. Jesus himself wept at the grave of his friend. So, while we rejoice that one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who bear the grief and pain of mourning.

Order for Burial

Prelude

A Simple Song from *Mass*

Sunrise, Sunset from *Fiddler on the Roof*

A Gaelic Blessing

Leonard Bernstein

Jerry Bock & Sheldon Harnick

John Rutter

Deep peace of the running wave to you.
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.
Deep peace of the gentle night to you.
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.
Deep peace of Christ, of Christ, the light of the world to you:
Deep peace of Christ to you.

A period of silence is held.

Please stand at the sound of the bell.

Opening The Peace of Wild Things, Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

A period of silence is held.

The Collect

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

A period of silence is held.

O God of grace and glory, we remember before you this day our sister Ellen. We thank you for giving her to us, her family and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth, until by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before. **Amen.**

Remembrance

Cory Blake

Hymn 482 Lord of all hopefulness *Sung by all, standing.*

Slane

Hymns are found in The Hymnal 1982, the blue book in the pew rack.

Reader A reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes.

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace,
and a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

A period of silence is held.

Music for Meditation To the Woods

Amy & Cory Blake

Psalms 23

Read in unison, seated.

King James Version

The Lord is my shepherd; *
I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; *
he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul; *
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his Name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; *
for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of mine enemies; *
thou anointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life, *
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

A period of silence is held.

Music for Meditation O Waly, Waly

Scottish ballad

Reader A reading from the first letter of Timothy.

As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

Silence is held for one minute of reflection.

Homily The Rev. William Stanley

Musical offering *Burgalesa*

Federico Moreno Torroba

The Prayers

Please stand as you are able.

Noel Hagens

Leader God, your will for us is abundant life; receive Ellen now into the fullness of life in your presence.

All **Hear our prayer.**

You know the thoughts of our hearts and our search for faith; shed the brightness of your light on Ellen, who also sought understanding.

Hear our prayer.

You are greater than all our ideas and images of you; draw Ellen into the mystery of your being.

Hear our prayer.

We know you as perfect Mercy and Love; welcome Ellen in the grace of that love and mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We praise you as the giver of life; gather all who mourn into the hope of renewed life.

Hear our prayer.

The Church commends all who die to the care of Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit; and so we commend Ellen to you, giving thanks for the gift of her life.

Hear our prayer.

May the Holy One, to whom all the desires of our hearts are known before we ask, hear our prayers for Ellen, and for all who mourn, and grant us newness of life, and peace. **Amen.**

A period of silence is held.

Poem Death Is Nothing At All, Henry Scott Holland

Bill Kirschhner

Death is nothing at all.
I have only slipped away to the next room.
I am I and you are you.
Whatever we were to each other,
That, we still are.

Call me by my old familiar name.
Speak to me in the easy way
which you always used.
Put no difference into your tone.
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed
at the little jokes we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me. Pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word
that it always was.
Let it be spoken without effect.
Without the trace of a shadow on it.

Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same that it ever was.
There is absolute unbroken continuity.
Why should I be out of mind
because I am out of sight?

I am but waiting for you.
For an interval.
Somewhere. Very near.
Just around the corner.

All is well.

Candle Lighting, Additional Prayers

All are invited to come forward in the center aisle to light one or more votive candles as a sign of your prayers or intentions. After lighting, please hand the candle lighter to the person following you. Return to your seat via the nearest side aisle.

Music for Candle Lighting

Barr na Sráida

Improvisation on *Simple Gifts*

Irish ballad, arr. Blake
Robert McCormick

The Commendation *Please stand. The ministers move to the remains.*

Officiant Go forth on your journey, child of God,
 throughout this world and to life eternal;
 Go in the power of God the Father
 who created you out of his love;

All **Go forth on your journey, child of God.**
 Go in the power of Jesus
 who redeemed you by his love;
 Go in the power of the Holy Spirit
 who sustains you by his love;
 Go out in the power of the Holy Three
 who enfold you in their love,

All **Go forth on your journey, child of God.**
 Go in communion with angels
 and all the holy ones of God;
 Go in the peace and liberty
 that is yours as a child of God;
 Go out and rejoice in the Glory of God.

All **Go forth on your journey, child of God.**

Closing Prayer

Read in unison.

O Lord, support us all the day long,
until the shadows lengthen
and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed,
and the fever of life is over, and our work is done.
Then, in your mercy,
grant us a safe lodging,
and a holy rest,
and peace at the last. Amen.

Hymn 664 My Shepherd will supply my need *Sung by all, standing.*

Resignation

Hymns are found in The Hymnal 1982, the blue book in the pew rack.

Postlude To the Sea

Grace Blake

All are invited to celebrate Ellen's life with her family at the reception in the fellowship hall, the building to your left, immediately following this service.

Participants

Remembrance: Cory Blake

Readers: Bea Miller, Lisa Thompson, Noel Hagens, Bill Kirschner

Assisting clergy: The Rev. John Jenkins

Homilist and Officiant: The Rev. William S. Stanley

Musicians: Amy Blake, *flute*; Cory Blake, *guitar*; Diana Chou, *piano*; Robert McCormick, *piano*;
Audrey Wright, *violin*

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St. Stephen's Episcopal Church + 6000 Grove Avenue + Richmond, VA 23226 + 804.288.2867 +
ststephensRVA.org