Celtic Evensong and Communion

The Last Sunday after Pentecost

November 22, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church ☙ Richmond, Virginia

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.

Starting at 5:10 p.m. 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 Celtic Tapestry — Joseph Martin

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

Opening Thoughts in Solitude — Thomas Merton

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end.

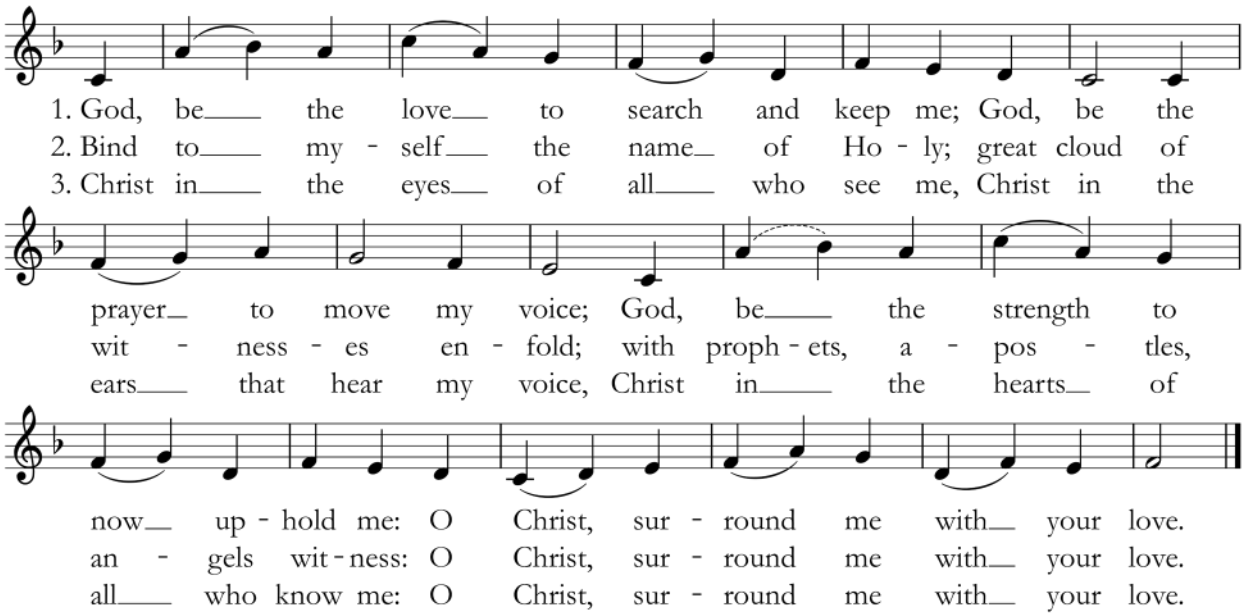
Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Silence is held after the reading.

Hymn God, be the love to search and keep me *Sung by all, standing as able.* *St. Clement*



A Prayer for the Evening

Eternal Spirit, living God,
in whom we live and move and have our being,
all that we are, have been, and shall be is known to you,
to the very secret of our hearts
and all that rises to trouble us.
Living flame burn into us,
cleansing wind, blow through us,
fountain of water, well up within us,
that we may love and praise in deed and in truth. **Amen.**

The Reading Matthew 25:31-46 *Please sit.*

Reader A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus said, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Silence is held for one minute of reflection.

Reflection Rob Nease

Silence is held for two minutes of reflection.

Music for Meditation Cilmeri trad. Scottish

Prayers for Ourselves and Others *Please stand.*

Deacon Let us keep silence before God, and through our minds and imaginations offer prayers which words might not contain.

Within the "inner room" of your soul and in the time between each petition, open to receive or offer that which arises.

Leader There is a time for every purpose under heaven. *Silence*

Leader A time for what we have to lay down… *Silence*

Leader A time for what we have to pick up… *Silence*

Leader A time for confronting what we are avoiding… *Silence*

Leader A time for holding compassion for ourselves and others… *Silence*

Leader A time for recognizing what we hope for… *Silence*

Leader A time for gratitude… [especially for ____]. *Silence*

Leader A time for standing for what is true, just, and good… *Silence*

Leader A time to pray for those who have died, [especially _____]. *Silence*

Leader In our time and in your time, O God, fulfill our prayers as is best for us and may your kingdom come. **Amen.**
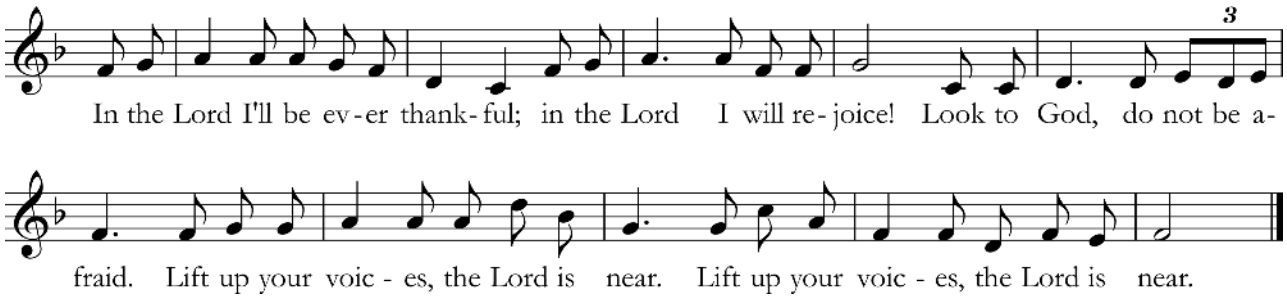
Candle Lighting, Additional Prayers

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 Sandpainting No. 3: Eastern Lightning Connor Chee

Hymn In the Lord I'll be ever thankful Jacques Berthier

Sung by all, standing. The congregation will repeat the refrain as the cantor sings the verses.



Verses: You are my salvation; I trust in you, I shall not be afraid, you are my strength; you are my song.
I call upon the Lord God who is worthy of praise. The Lord shall save me.

The Grace Love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for God is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as God is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. **Amen.** *Luke 6:35-38a*

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 STSTEPHENSRVA to 73256.

At the Offertory *Simple Gifts* arr. Kathryn Cater/Sandy Norman

The Great Thanksgiving *Please stand.* Eucharistic Prayer written by the Rev. Janet Trisk for the Order of the Holy Cross, Anglican Church of South Africa

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

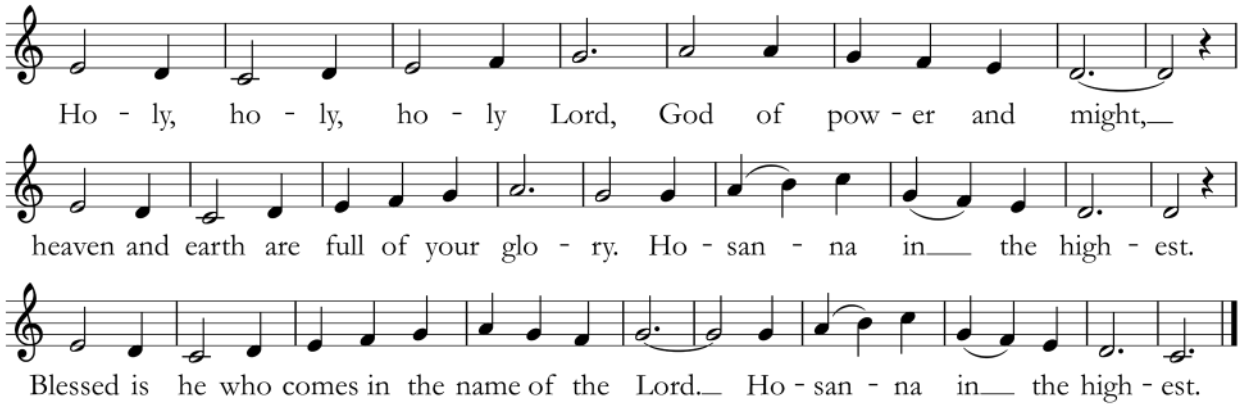
Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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.* Michael Simpson



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."**

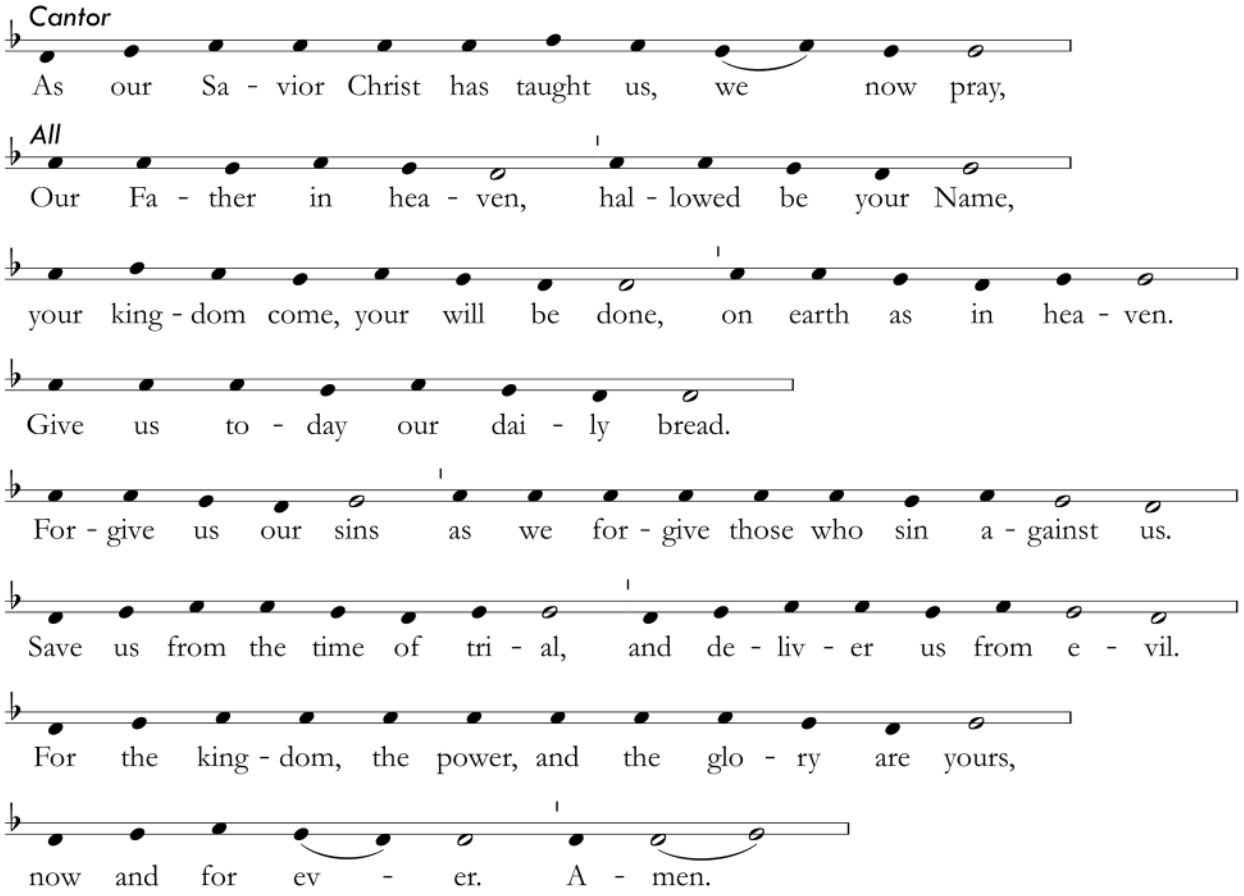
Celebrant So we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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.

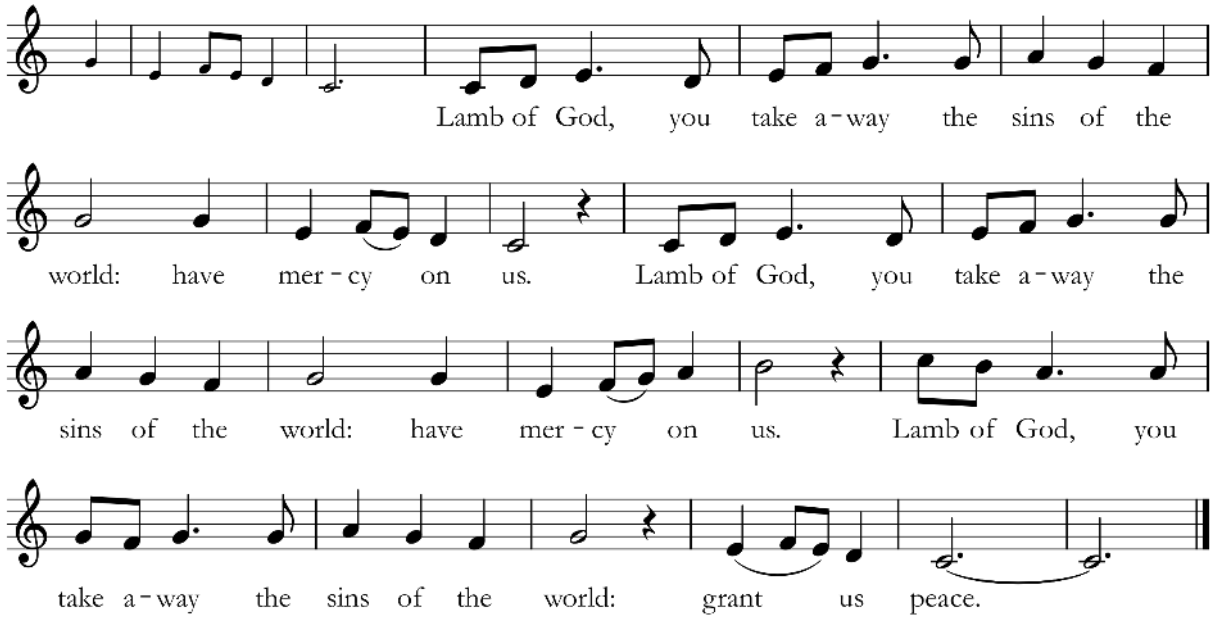
We ask this through Jesus who gave his body that we might be one and his blood that we might find new life. With him, and through him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, be to you, O God, all honor and glory forever. **AMEN.**

The Lord's Prayer



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

Sung by all. Michael Simpson



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

Give me Jesus	trad. spiritual, arr. Hall Johnson
Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendor	Welsh hymn, arr. Jane Southwick Cool
Thanksgiving	George Winston

After Communion *Please stand.*

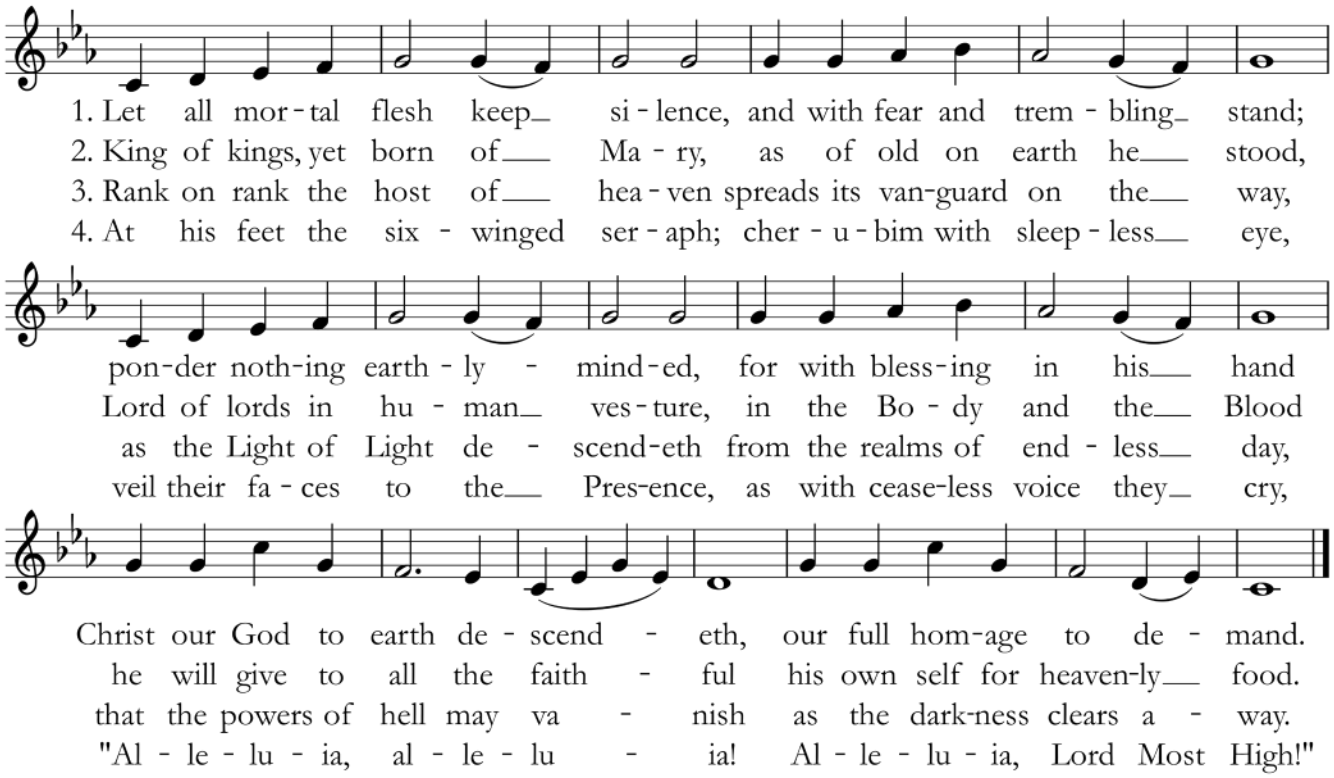
Celebrant Let us pray.

All **Loving God,**
we give you thanks
that in the sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood,
you awaken us to your indwelling Presence
and our true life.
Help us to recognize and honor
your Presence in one another,
to treat each other with reverence and humility,
and to become, more and more,
the people we already are in you. Amen.

The Blessing St. Clare of Assisi

Celebrant Live without fear;
your creator has made you holy,
has always protected and sustained you,
and loves you as a mother.
Therefore, go in peace to follow the good road
and may God's blessing be with you always. **Amen.**

Hymn Let all mortal flesh keep silence *Sung by all.* *Picardy*



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 *McKee* trad. Spiritual, arr. Justin McCarthy

Postlude *Picardy* arr. Anne Krentz Organ

All are invited to participate in the ritual burning of prayers immediately after this service. Exit at the breezeway near the baptismal font.

Memorials

The flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of William David Baldwin, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Fontaine Shuptrine, and Mr. and Mrs. Guy A. Baldwin by their family.

Participants

CELEBRANT: The Rev. Will Stanley; DEACON: The Rev. Cate Anthony; SUBDEACON: Susan Wilkes; READER: Will Ferguson; INTERCESSOR: Anne Townsend; REFLECTOR: Rob Nease; CHALICE BEARERS: Barbara Massey, Alice Meadows, Pam Redd, Audra Tuttle; MUSICIANS: Lauren Clay, *cantor*; Alana Carithers, *violin*; 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 outside the parish office and in the vestibule (inside the Three Chopt Road entrance to the church). Names in italics were added to the prayer list this week. To add someone to the prayer list, please contact Kitty Ball in the parish office, 804.288.2867 or **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.