



2 Put not your trust in rulers, nor in any child of earth, \*  
**for there is no help in them.**

3 When they breathe their last, they return to earth, \*  
**and in that day their thoughts perish.**

4 Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help! \*  
**whose hope is in the Lord their God;**

5 Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; \*  
**whose promise abides for ever;**

6 Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, \*  
**and food to those who hunger.**

7 God sets the prisoners free;  
and opens the eyes of the blind; \*  
**God lifts up those who are bowed down;**

8 God loves the righteous;  
and cares for the stranger; \*  
**God sustains the orphan and widow,  
but frustrates the way of the wicked.**

9 God shall reign for ever, \*  
**your God, O Zion, throughout all generations.  
Alleluia!**

**Second Lesson:** A Reading from *This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation, and the Stories that Make Us*, Cole Arthur Riley \*\*

Have you ever stood in the presence of a tree and listened to the wind pass through its leaves? The roots and body stand defiant and unmoved. But listen. The branches stretch out their tongues and whisper shhhhh.

Trees make symphonies without their trunks ever moving, almost as if the stillness of their centers amplifies their sound. The tree may appear still, but if you look closer, you'll see that each leaf flails with breath. The tree may seem alone, but plow deep and you'll unearth its secret gnarled roots—the grotesque and the beautiful—creeping in the soil, reaching toward the ancestors.

Thomas Merton said, "No writing on the solitary, meditative dimensions of life can say anything that has not already been said better by the wind in the pine trees." I hold this close.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## The Gospel: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

### Glory to you, Lord Christ

When the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

‘This people honors me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me;  
in vain do they worship me,  
teaching human precepts as doctrines.’

You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.” Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.” For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

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

**Sermon**

The Rev. Dr. Nina R. Pooley

**Affirmation of Faith**

*(page 2 booklet)*

### The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others, Especially:

**Those on our prayer list:** *We pray for: Ken; Tommie; Keith; Marcus; Sokpha; Mike; Will; Jennifer; Judy; Marty; Valerie; Ann; Marc; Sam; Pat; Becky; Susan; James; We pray for a just peace for Ukraine, and for those affected by the violence in Israel and Palestine. Please include your intercessions.*

**Offertory Hymn 335** “I am the bread of life” *(stanzas 1-3)* *Bread of Life*

*stanza 1 – sung by all*

*stanza 2 duet, refrain sung by all*

*stanza 3 – sung by all*

**The Great Thanksgiving** (page 5, booklet)

**Communion Duet** “The gift of love” arr. Hal Hopson

### **Announcements**

**Hymn** “For the beauty of the earth” (see insert) Dix  
stanzas 1-2 sung by all  
stanza 3 duet  
stanzas 4-6 sung by all

**Voluntary** “God, who stretched the spangled heavens” Wilbur Held

### **\*\* NOTES ON TODAY’S READINGS**

The First Lesson: *Published in 2020 by Penguin Books in Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver, p. 14*

The Second Lesson: *Cole Arthur Riley, This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation, and the Stories that Make Us (New York: Convergent Books, 2022), vii.*

*Cole Arthur Riley, author of the today’s second lesson, is the creator of Black Liturgies, a space where Black words of dignity, lament, rage, and rest, are curated and integrated with a liberating spirituality. An excellent collection of prayers, poems, and meditations was published under this title in 2024. She serves as the content and spiritual formation manager for Chesterton House: A Center for Christian Studies at Cornell University.*

### **PARISH NOTICES**

**POP UP CHOIR TODAY-** Please join Joy Mullen at the front of the church and blend your voices during the offertory and final hymns.

**ST. STEPHEN’S TABLE** - Gifts in thanksgiving or in memory can be made by sending a donation to the church with the name of the person to be honored or remembered. You can also make a donation online! Just go to our website, select “Give,” and “St. Stephen’s Table” from the Fund menu.

**OFFICE HOURS CHANGING** - Beginning in September, the church office will be open Tuesday – Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**COFFEE HOUR** will resume on Sunday, September 8.

**SUNDAY FUNDAY** returns on September 22.

**SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 29** we will join the Campus of Downtown Churches at 10:30 a.m. for an ecumenical service on The Common. (Rain location: Zion Lutheran) The next practice for a joint choir will be held at Price Memorial Church, 27 East St., Tuesday evening, Sept. 3 at 6:45 p.m. Anyone wishing to participate should attend, the choir will be closed to new members after Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>. (Subsequent rehearsals will be held on Monday evenings.)

**RECYCLING SCHEDULE**

Paper Toter Brendan Dillon

Cardboard-Home Joan Evans



**GIVING TO ST. STEPHEN'S IS EASY-** Scan the QR code to find our giving form. Or, text “giviststephens\$*your amount*” to 73256. (example: giviststephens\$25 will donate \$25.) Message and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel.

**MINSTERS OF THE CELEBRATION**

CELEBRANT

The Rev. Dr. Nina R. Pooley

LECTORS

Josie Ellis, Jeff Pringle

LAY MINISTERS

Dan Moon, Suzanne White

ALTAR GUILD

David Nevin (Chair)

GREETERS

Paula Morey, Susan LeBourdias

VESTRY GREETER

William O'Neill

VOCALISTS

Jeffrey Hine, *tenor*; Wavelyn Hine, *alto*

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**THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE**

**Office Hours:** Tuesday-Thursday 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

**Worship:** Wednesday, September 4, 6:30 p.m. Compline;  
September 8, 2024 10 a.m.

**St. Stephen's Table:** Thursday and Friday, Grab and Go 4:30 p.m.

**Meetings:** Friday at 6:30 p.m.; Saturday at 10:00 a.m. NA - Tuesday & Wednesday 7:30 p.m., Saturday at 6:30 p.m. Dining Room

## THIS WEEK'S PRAYER LIST

**In our Parish prayers,** *We pray for:* Ken; Tommie C; Keith C; Kathryn D; Marcus B; Sokpha I; Mike E.; Will C.; Jennifer D. Judy J.; Marty P; Valerie A; Ann M; Marc B; Sam; Pat M; Becky; Susan C; James; Presiding Bishop Michael Curry; Presiding Bishop –elect Sean Rowe; We pray for a just peace for Ukraine, and for those affected by the violence in Israel and Palestine.

*And those serving in the armed forces and their families:* MAJ Andrew B., CPT Nichols P., CPT Curran J.D., Lance CPL Chad L., SPC Amanda D., Pvt. Corey F.D., Army Ranger Sean J., Micah H.

### ***We pray for our community:***

Local Food Programs  
Pittsfield City Government  
The Governor of Massachusetts

### ***In Our Diocesan cycle of prayer we pray for:***

Christ Church Cathedral, Springfield;  
Admin. Assistant to the Canon to the Ordinary & Trustees, Karen Warren  
Seminaries of the Episcopal Church;  
Multicultural Bridge, Berkshires

### ***In our Anglican cycle of prayer we pray for:***

Sunday: Igreja Anglicana de Mocambique e Angola  
Monday: Diocese of Ikeduru (Nigeria)  
Tuesday: Diocese of Ikwerre (Nigeria)  
Wednesday: Diocese of Ikwo (Nigeria)  
Thursday: Diocese of Ikwuano (Nigeria)  
Friday: Diocese of Ijaje (Nigeria)  
Saturday; Diocese of Ije-Oluji (Nigeria)

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### **VESTRY**

Josie Ellis, Co-Warden  
Suzanne White, Treasurer  
Christopher Perry, Clerk  
David Nevin  
James Alden

John Garinther Co-Warden  
William O'Neill, Asst. Treasurer  
Wendy W. Coakley  
Chris Plankey  
Caleb Harmon

### **Our Staff**

The Rev. Dr. Nina R. Pooley, Rector  
ninapooley@revnina.org

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Dan Moon,  
Director of St Stephen's Table  
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Bert Boos, Office Assistant  
bboos@ststephensfield.org

Weekday Sextons - Berkshire County ARC  
Sunday Sexton Roy Stillman

### **The Diocese of Western Massachusetts**

The Rt. Rev Douglas Fisher  
800-322-8513 www.diocesewma.org

## Welcome to Worship at St. Stephen's

We are delighted to have you with us today as we worship together. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is an inclusive parish welcoming all people - regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or creed. God loves you, and so do we!

### **All Are Welcome to Receive from God's Table.**

Each week we share the bread and the wine: the gifts of God, given for the people of God. We invite you to receive communion, but, if you'd rather receive a blessing, please come forward and indicate that by crossing your arms across your chest.

### ***Receiving Communion:***

The bread - When you come forward hold your hands out together, palm up. The clergy person will place a wafer in your hands, and say, "The body of Christ." Your response: "Amen." (Please let the clergy know if you'd prefer a gluten free wafer.)

The wine - is offered by chalice bearers on either side of the aisle in front of the altar area. Those sitting on the right should choose the right side chalice, those sitting on the left, choose the left side chalice. The chalice bearer will offer the wine, saying, "The Blood of Christ." Your response: "Amen." You may receive the wine by taking a small sip from the chalice, or by dipping your wafer in the wine, taking care not to touch the wine with your fingers. You may also choose to hear the words and respond without choosing to partake of the wine.

### **Children are always welcome at worship!!**

Families are welcome to sit wherever they wish. There are child-friendly books in a bookshelf near a coloring station in the back, on the right side of the sanctuary. There's a second coloring station on the front left, where there is also our **Kids' Own Space activity area**. There's a Nursery Nook in the Guild Room for caregivers of infants and toddlers who need to take a break during worship. Caregivers, please come and go as your child needs to - for their safety, **we ask that children be accompanied at all times**. Sunday school is offered on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month, September through May.

### **Restrooms are located in our Parish House**

Exit the sanctuary via the doors on either side of the altar and follow the signs.