

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
The First Sunday of Creation Season: Pray
September 7, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Voluntary “The enchanted garden” Maurice Ravel

Hymn 390 “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” *Lobe den Herren*

Welcome

Opening Acclamation *(page 1 in the booklet)*

The Creation Collect of the Day

Grant us, O God, the courage to choose Jesus’ way even at great cost, bearing our cross and releasing our possessions, for the liberation and healing of your world; through Jesus Christ the Wisdom of Creation, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Lesson: from the writings of St. Thérèse of Lisieux

With enraptured gaze we beheld the white moon rising quietly behind the tall trees, the silvery rays it was casting upon sleeping nature, the bright stars twinkling in the deep skies, the light breath of the evening breeze making the snowy clouds float easily along; all this raised our souls to heaven.

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

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 139: 1-5, 12-17 *(Please read responsively)* *Domine, probasti*

- 1 O God, you have searched me out and known me; *
 you know my sitting down and my rising up;
 you discern my thoughts from afar.
- 2 You trace my journeys and my resting-places *
 and are acquainted with all my ways.
- 3 Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, *
 but you, O God, know it altogether.
- 4 You press upon me behind and before *
 and lay your hand upon me.
- 5 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; *
 it is so high that I cannot attain to it.

New to St. Stephen's? You will find helpful information on the back of this leaflet.

- 12 For you yourself created my inmost parts; *
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- 13 I will thank you because I am marvelously made; *
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.
- 14 My body was not hidden from you, *
**while I was being made in secret
and woven in the depths of the earth.**
- 15 Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb;
all of them were written in your book; *
**they were fashioned day by day,
when as yet there was none of them.**
- 16 How deep I find your thoughts, O God! *
how great is the sum of them!
- 17 If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand; *
to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.

Second Lesson: “Praying”

Mary Oliver

It doesn't have to be
the blue iris, it could be
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few
small stones; just
pay attention, then patch
a few words together and don't try
to make them elaborate, this isn't
a contest but the doorway
into thanks, and a silence in which
another voice may speak.

Hear what the Spirit is saying through the Poet.

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Luke 14: 25-33

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Now large crowds were traveling with Jesus; and he turned and said to them, “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it?

Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.”

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Christ.

Sermon

The Rev. Dr. Nina R. Pooley

Affirmation of Faith *(page 2 in the booklet)*

The Prayers of the People *(page 2 in the booklet)*

We pray for: Ken; Keith; Marcus; Sokpha; Dren; James; A.J; Judy; Robertine; Steph; Paul; Craig; Glen; Thom; Mike; Jay; Linda; Evan; Haley; Eve; Barbara; Ted; Sophia; Sue; Marjorie; Natasha; Philip, Brady; Amy; Wavehyn; a just peace for Ukraine, those affected by the violence in the Middle East; and Sudan.

Confession *(page 4 in the booklet)*

Peace *(page 5 in booklet)*

Offertory Music “Come thou fount of every blessing” *Nettleton*

The Great Thanksgiving *(page 5 in booklet)*

Fraction Anthem *(page 8 in booklet)*

Communion Solo “Now thank we all our God” Jeffrey Honoré

Post Communion Prayer *(page 9 in the booklet)*

Hymn 409 “The spacious firmament on high” *Creation*

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

† † †

Notes on Today's Readings

First Lesson: St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897) was a Carmelite nun, canonized in 1925.

The Psalm: During Creation Season, texts will be taken from the St. Helena Psalter

Second Lesson: "Praying" from *Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver*; Penguin Books, 2020, p 131. Mary Oliver, American poet, (1935-2019)



PARISH NOTICES

WHO ARE WE? St. Stephen's Parish is a community of people who together seek to serve our community, drawing strength and joy from worshipping together. We don't all believe the same, act the same, vote the same, or dress the same – but we strive to love the same, as Christ loved and served all people.

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 "Support Our Ministries," and follow the prompts to the list of gift opportunities. Select "St. Stephen's Table" and follow the directions.

JOIN OUR CHORUS OF GENEROSITY! – We've surpassed the \$10,000 mark! Our spectacular Steinway is receiving much needed TLC...to the "tune" of a \$15,000 overhaul.

Can you sponsor one of our piano's keys? If 88 of us chip in \$170 (or whatever you are able to give), we will be able to avoid paying for this very necessary maintenance out of our endowment.

As a token of appreciation, those who are able to contribute will receive a handcrafted bookmark "noting" your donation.

Let's create a harmony of giving to reach this \$15,000 crescendo!

- **To give online:** Look for Piano TLC in the Funds dropdown.
- **To give by check:** Please make a notation for "Piano TLC".

BISHOP FISHER WILL HOLD HIS VISITATION AT ST. STEPHEN'S ON SEPTEMBER 21ST.

SUNDAY FUNDAY RETURNS ON SEPTEMBER 28! Stay tuned for more information.

FALL BOOK CLUB – The fall reading selection, The Serviceberry by Robin Wall Kimmerer, will be discussed on Sunday October 5th after church and facilitated by Jim Cawse and Marietta Rapetti Cawse.

THE TEXT OF THE SUNDAY SERMONS can be found on the church website: look under the Worship heading for Sermons.



GIVING TO ST. STEPHEN'S IS EASY – Scan the QR code to find our giving form, or test “giveststephens\$youramount” to 73256 (example: giveststephens\$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.

Bottles/Cans Toter – Chris Plankey	Cardboard Breakdown- Mark Miller
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MINISTERS OF THE CELEBRATION

CELEBRANT

The Rev. Dr. Nina R. Pooley

LECTORS

William Frazier, Donald Phipps

LAY MINISTERS.

Chris Plankey, Brendan Dillon Harmon

ALTAR GUILD

Claudia Austin Curry, Jim Brennan

GREETERS

Anne Williams, Josie Ellis

VESTRY GREETER

Jim Brennan

MUSCIANS

Cassidy Smith, *trombone and voice*

Jeannette Smith, *voice*

Matt Smith, *clarinet and voice*

Savannah Smith, *voice*

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THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

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

Worship: Wednesday, September 3, Compline at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom

Sunday, September 7, 10 a.m.

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

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

THIS WEEK'S PRAYER LIST

In our Parish prayers, we pray for:: *Ken E.; Keith C.; Marcus; Sokpha; Dren; James; AJ R.; Steph M.; Robertine M.; Judy; Paul A.; Craig S.; Glen M.; Mike E.; Thom S.; Jay G.; Linda H.; Evan C.; Haley; Eve; Barbara; Ted K.; Sophia; Sue C.; Marjorie C.; Natasha L.; Philip R.; Brady W.; Amy; Wavelyn H.; a just peace for Ukraine, those affected by the violence in the Middle East; and Sudan, those who were killed and all those affected by gun violence in Minneapolis.*

And those serving in the armed forces and their families: MAJ Andrew B., CPT Nichols P., 1LT 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

Habitat for Humanity in Pittsfield

Department of Mental Health

Government of the United States

In Our Diocesan cycle of prayer we pray for.

St. Peter's, Springfield;

Human Resources & Compliance Specialist, Susan Olbon

Natl. Episcopal Historians & Archivists

In our Anglican cycle of prayer we pray for:

Sunday the Anglican Church of Southern Africa

Monday: Diocese of Okinawa (The Nippon Sel Ko Kei)

Tuesday Diocese of Oklahoma (The Episcopal Church)

Wednesday Diocese of Okrika (Nigeria)

Thursday: Diocese of Oleh (Nigeria)

Friday: Diocese of Olo (South Sudan)

Saturday: Diocese of Olympia (The Episcopal Church)

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

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VESTRY

John Garinther, Co-Warden
J. Christopher Perry, Treasurer
James Alden
James Brennan
Leah Luczynski

David Nevin, Co-Warden
Christopher Plankey, Clerk
Caleb Dillon Harmon
William Morey
Christine Furcinite-Reynolds

Our Staff

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Weekday Sextons – Ecuadorian Women's Co-op
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.

Collection Plates are located at each entrance. All gifts gratefully accepted.

Restrooms are located in our Parish House: Exit the sanctuary via the doors on either side of the altar, follow the signs.