

**Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**The Fourth Sunday of Creation Season: ADVOCATE**  
**Saturday, Sept. 26, 5:00 p.m. & Sunday, Sept. 27, 2026, 10:00 a.m.**

**Voluntary**                      “The enchanted garden”                      Maurice Ravel

**Hymn 379**                      “God is Love”                      *Abbot's Leigh*

**Welcome**

**The Opening Acclamation**    (*page 1 in the booklet*)

**Gloria Hymn**            (*page 1 in the booklet*)

**The Creation Collect for the Day**

O God, you show your glory throughout your Creation, calling it very good: Grant us the fullness of your blessing, that we, stewarding your garden, may become partakers in your joy; through Jesus Christ the Wisdom of Creation, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**First Lesson:** A Reading from *A Theology of Creation*, by Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch

The maternal sea is polluted, the heavens are rent, the forests are being destroyed and the desert areas are increasing. We must protect creation. Better yet, we must embellish it, render it spiritual, transfigure it. But nothing will be done unless there is a general conversion of men's minds and hearts.

Hear what the Spirit is saying through the Author.

**Thanks be to God.**

**A Song of Creation**    (*to be read responsively*)    *Benedicite, omnia opera Domini*  
St. Helena's Breviary, *Song of the Three Young Men*, 35-65

Glorify God;

**sing praise and give honor for ever.**

All you works of God in the high vault of heaven; \*

**You angels and all powers of God,**

Sun and moon and stars of the sky, \*

**Every shower of rain and fall of dew,**

Winter and summer, frost and cold \*

**Ice and sleet, nights and days,**

O shining light and enfolding dark, \*

**Storm clouds and thunderbolts:**

Glorify God;

**sing praise and give honor for ever.**

Let the earth glorify God: \*

**All mountains and hills and all that grows on the earth,**

O springs of water, seas and streams, \*

**O whales and all that move in the waters,**

All birds of the air and beasts of the wild, \*

**And all you flocks and herds:**

Glorify God;

**sing praise and give honor for ever.**

O men and women, siblings everywhere, \*

**All people of God,**

O priests and servants of God, \*

**O spirits and souls of the righteous,**

All you that are holy and humble of hearts. \*

**Let us glorify the holy and undivided Trinity:**

Glorify God;

**sing praise and give honor for ever.**

**Second Lesson:** A Reading of “Seeds of life and hope” Steven Charleston

I have a small vision to share, one that came to me through the night walks we call dreams. In my dream, I saw a shadowy figure standing high on a darkened hill, throwing seeds into the wind. Once the seeds left the figure’s hand, they turned to tiny points of light and were carried away into the sky. That’s all I remember, but it is enough. You and I stand on a windswept moment in history. All around us is a gathering darkness. But we are not afraid because we have seeds of life and hope in our pockets. Our task is to cast them as far and wide as we can. The breath of the Spirit will do the rest.

Hear what the Spirit is saying through the Author

**Thanks be to God**

**The Gospel** Matthew 21: 23-32

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

**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.”

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

**Sermon**

The Rev.David DeSmith

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

**The Prayers of the People**      *(page 3 in the booklet)*

*We also pray for: Ken, Keith, Marcus, Robertine, Paul, Glen, Ted, Charley, Craig; Natasha; Sue; Mike; Don; Pat; Heather; Caleb; Angelo; Linda; Sharon; Julie; Penny; Jay; Will; a just peace for Ukraine; those affected by the violence in the Middle East and Sudan.*

**Confession**      *(page 5 in the booklet)*

**Peace**      *(page 5 in the booklet)*  
*(Collection Plates are located at each Entrance)*

**Offertory Anthem**      “My Lord, what a morning” *Spiritual*/H.T. Burleigh

My Lord, what a morning, when the stars begin to fall.  
 Done quit all my worldly ways, join that heavenly band.

*Revelation 8:10*

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

**Sanctus**    (*Sung by all*)

**Fraction Anthem**                      (*Sung by all*)

**Communion Anthem**            “Deep River”                      *Spiritual*/Charles Garner

Deep river, my home is over Jordan,  
Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into campground.

Oh, brother, won't you come along?  
I want to cross over into campground.

Oh, sister, won't you come along?  
I want to cross over into campground.

Oh, don't you want to go to that gospel feast,  
That promised land where all is peace?

Oh, Deep river, Lord,  
I want to cross over into campground.

My Lord, got my ticket to the place across the river,  
That promised land where all is peace?

Oh, deep river, Lord,  
I want to cross over into campground.

*Traditional*

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

**Blessing**

**Announcements**

**Hymn 435**                      “At the Name of Jesus”                      *King's Weston*

**Voluntary**                      “Festal March”                      Florence Price

†††

## NOTES ON TODAY'S READINGS

**First Lesson** from *A Theology of Creation*, by Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch (1920-2012) As quoted in *Season of Creation, Episcopal Liturgy Guide*, 2024, page 141.

**Second Lesson** “Seeds of life and hope” from *Ladder to the Light: An Indigenous Elder's Meditation on Hope and Courage*, Steven Charleston, Broadleaf Books, 2021.

## 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 may be made by sending a donation to the church or through our website. On the website, select "Give," to find the link to the online giving page. Select "St. Stephen's Table" from the Fund menu.

**NEXT WEEK-** Celebrate St. Francis Day with a Virtual Blessing of the Pets (bring a photo!) and The Rev. Libby Wade at the 10 a.m. service.

**SUNDAY FUNDAY TODAY** Children in K – 4 gather before the 10:00 a.m. service in the Sears Room.

### **AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) TRAINING**

We have an AED device mounted on the wall of the stairwell as you walk up the stairs from the Allen St door. This device, used when someone is in sudden cardiac arrest, is intended to be used by laypeople who have received minimal training. AED training is scheduled for Sunday, Oct 11 at 11:15 AM in the Sears Room. The training will be conducted by parishioner J.D. Hebert, an Advanced EMT with 35 years of experience; it will take about 30 minutes.

**SABBATICAL PROJECT** - One of our sabbatical projects is the installation of a Little Free Library on the front lawn of the church. The total cost for an eco-friendly, low maintenance two-story little library kit is \$700. If you would like to donate, please note "Little Free Library" with your donation check or select "Special donations" from the online *Giving* menu and use the memo to note "Little Free Library."



**GIVING TO ST. STEPHEN'S IS EASY** – Scan the QR code to find our giving form or text “giveststephens\$youramount” to 73256 (example:giveststephens\$25 will donate \$25.) Google Pay accepted. Message and data rates apply. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel.

Paper Toter – Roy Sutton

Cardboard-Home Jeff Pringle

## THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

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

*Worship:* Compline: Wed. October 7, 6:30 p.m. Zoom,  
Sunday October 4., 10a.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: Saturday, 6:30 DR

## MINISTERS OF THE CELEBRATION

|                          |                                         |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| CELEBRANT 5p.m. & 10a.m. | The Rev. David DeSmith                  |
| LECTOR 5p.m.             | Jim Alden                               |
| LAY MINISTER. 5p.m.      | Jim Alden                               |
| LECTORS 10a.m.           | Jim Cawse, Susan LeBourdais             |
| LAY MINISTERS 10a.m.     | Jim Alden, Dan Moon                     |
| ALTAR GUILD              | Bill Frazier, Diane Forsyth, Angie Moon |
| GREETERS                 | Anne Williams, Andrea Stasioski         |
| VESTRY GREETER           | Jim Brennan                             |
| CRUCIFER                 | Christine Furchinite- Reynolds          |
| COFFEE HOUR              | Angie Moon                              |

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## THIS WEEK'S PRAYER LIST

***In our Parish prayers, we pray for:*** Ken, Keith, Marcus, Robertine, Paul, Glen, Ted, Charley, Craig; Bill; Sue; Natasha; Mike; Don; Pat; Mary; Heather; Caleb; Angelo; Linda; Jay Sharon; Julie; Penny; Will; a just peace for Ukraine; those affected by the violence in the Middle East and Sudan.

***We pray for 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:***

Local Food Program  
Pittsfield City Government  
The Governor of Massachusetts

***In Our Diocesan cycle of prayer we pray for.***

Trinity Church, Ware;  
Global Missions Team;  
Administrative Assistant, Lydia Rosado  
Greater Springfield. Council of Churches  
For the Mission of the Church

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

Sunday: The Church of Bangladesh  
Monday: Diocese of Central Buganda (Uganda)  
Wednesday: Diocese of Buhiga (Burundi)  
Thursday: Diocese of Bujumbura (Burundi)  
Friday: Diocese of Bukavu (L'Eglise Anglicane Du Congo)  
Saturday: Diocese of Bukedi (Uganda)

## **St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**

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[www.ststephenspittsfield.org](http://www.ststephenspittsfield.org)



### **VESTRY**

John Garinther, Co-Warden  
J. Christopher Perry, Treasurer  
James Brennan  
Caleb Dillon-Harmon  
Leah Luczynski  
Anne Williams

David Nevin, Co-Warden  
Christopher Plankey, Clerk  
Al Symonds, Asst. Treasurer  
Christine Furcinite-Reynolds  
William Morey

### **Our Staff**

The Rev. Dr. Nina R. Pooley, Rector  
[ninapooley@revnina.org](mailto:ninapooley@revnina.org)

Sarah Morrison, Parish Administrator  
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Bert Boos, Office Assistant  
[bboos@ststephensfield.org](mailto:bboos@ststephensfield.org)

Joy Mullen, Director of Music  
[jmullen@ststephenspittsfield.org](mailto:jmullen@ststephenspittsfield.org)

Dan Moon,  
Director of St Stephen's Table  
[dmoon@pittsfield.net](mailto:dmoon@pittsfield.net)

Weekday Sextons – Ecuadorian Women's Co-op  
Sunday Sexton      Roy Stillman

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

The Rt. Rev. Miguelina Howell

800-322-8513    [www.diocesewma.org](http://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.