

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Santa Clarita

The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost — Proper 25

10:30am — October 26, 2025

*The Altar flowers are given to the glory of God by Colleen Gibbons
in memory of Jeffrey Stephen Gibbons, my beloved husband.*

Before the service begins, we encourage you to use the following for meditation.

God invites us to cooperate in stewarding the life to which we have been entrusted, to the opportunities afforded us, and to the limitations which surround us. God invites us to say Yes to life ... which is hugely challenging and, I would say, equally necessary if we are to live the whole life that God has given us. -Br. Curtis Almquist, SSJE

-Generally, we stand to give praise, sit to listen (to scripture and sermon), and stand or kneel to pray. These postures help us stay focused on the worship, but there are no strict rules and you should take whatever posture is appropriate to your needs.-

Prelude

For the Beauty of the Earth
Alexander Georgakis, piano

John Rutter

-Processions have long been an important part of liturgical worship. At the beginning of the service they signify an intention to move toward the altar and into direct relationship to worship God. Those who wish to may bow in reverence as the cross passes to acknowledge Christ's sacrifice upon it.-

Entrance Hymn #372

"Praise to the living God!"
Joseph Chrisman, organ

Leoni

1. Praise to the liv - ing God! All prais - ed be his Name
2. Form - less, all love - ly forms de - clare his love - li - ness;
3. His Spi - rit flow - eth free, high surg - ing where it will:
4. E - ter - nal life hath he im - plant - ed in the soul;
who was, and is, and is to be, for aye the same.
ho - ly, no ho - li - ness of earth can his ex - press.
in pro - phet's word he spoke of old; he speak - eth still.
his love shall be our strength and stay while a - ges roll.
The one e - ter - nal God ere - aught that now ap - pears:
Lo, he is Lord of all. Cre - a - tion speaks his praise,
Es - tab - lished is his law, and change - less it shall stand,
Praise to the liv - ing God! All prais - ed be his Name
the first, the last, be - yond all thought his time - less years!
and ev - ery - where a - bove, be - low, his will o - beys.
deep writ up - on the hu - man heart, on sea, on land.
who was, and is, and is to be, for aye the same.

-The liturgy is God's community gathered to actively share the Word and the Eucharist. We invite and encourage your participation in this community. Please join in the spoken responses and hymns shown in the service bulletin.-

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

-The opening acclamation is the greeting of the people by the presider and their response, which begins the service. Its purpose is to bring the congregation corporately into dialogue with the presider and set a tone for the celebration.-

Priest: Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.
People: **Glory to God for ever and ever.**

Collect for Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Priest and People:

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. **Amen.**

-A Collect is a short prayer with a specific structure. Its purpose is to gather into one the individual prayers of the People. The Collect of the Day is a specific prayer that reflects upon the lectionary readings for the given day of the liturgical year.-

The Collect of the Day

Priest: God be with you.
People: **And also with you.**
Priest: Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

THE LESSONS

The First Reading Joel 2:23-32

Reader: James Webb

A Reading from the Book of Joel.

O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before. The threshing floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent against you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the Lord, am your God and there is no other. And my people shall never again be put to shame. Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit. I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

-The Book of Common Prayer has always placed great importance on the Psalms in worship. They are sung or said in every service of the church, and their words make up the petitions and language of our liturgy. -

Psalm 65

Reader: Ken Higginbotham

- 1 You are to be praised, O God, in Zion; *
to you shall vows be performed in Jerusalem.
- 2 To you that hear prayer shall all flesh come, *
because of their transgressions.
- 3 Our sins are stronger than we are, *
but you will blot them out.
- 4 Happy are they whom you choose
and draw to your courts to dwell there! *
they will be satisfied by the beauty of your house,
by the holiness of your temple.
- 5 Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness,
O God of our salvation, *
O Hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the seas that are far away.
- 6 You make fast the mountains by your power; *
they are girded about with might.

- 7 You still the roaring of the seas, *
the roaring of their waves,
and the clamor of the peoples.
- 8 Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your marvelous signs; *
you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.
- 9 You visit the earth and water it abundantly;
you make it very plenteous; *
the river of God is full of water.
- 10 You prepare the grain, *
for so you provide for the earth.
- 11 You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; *
with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.
- 12 You crown the year with your goodness, *
and your paths overflow with plenty.
- 13 May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, *
and the hills be clothed with joy.
- 14 May the meadows cover themselves with flocks,
and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; *
let them shout for joy and sing.

The Second Reading 2 Timothy 4:6-8,16-18

Reader: Ken Higginbotham

A Reading from the Second Letter of Timothy.

I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing. At my first defense no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

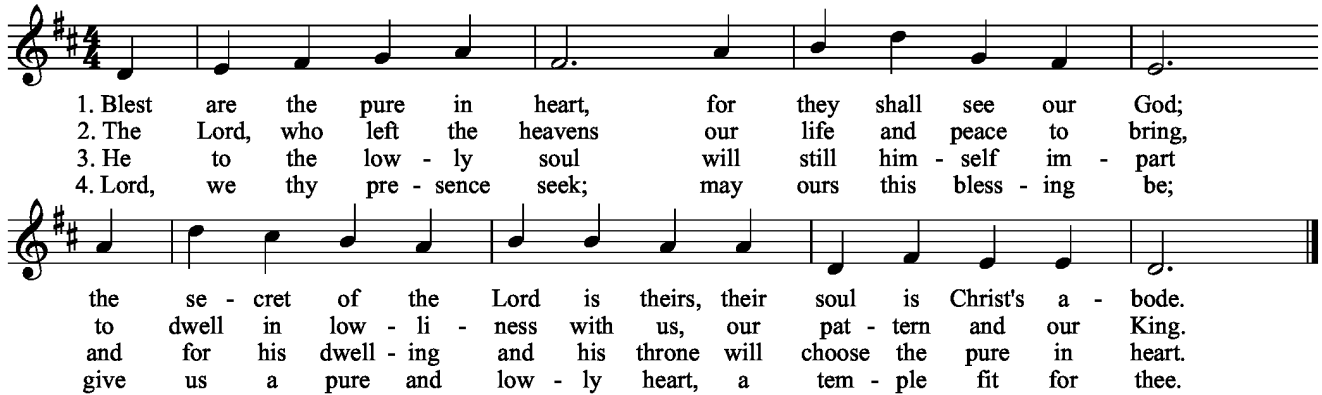
-The Gospel procession moves into the congregation as a liturgical reminder that Jesus walked among us.-

Please stand as you are able.

Gradual Hymn #656

"Blest are the pure in heart"

Franconia



1. Blest are the pure in heart, for they shall see our God;
2. The Lord, who left the heavens for our life and peace to bring,
3. He to the low - ly soul will still him - self im - part
4. Lord, we thy pre - sence seek; may ours this bless - ing be;

the se - cret of the Lord is theirs, their soul is Christ's a - bode.
to dwell in low - li - ness with us, our pat - tern and our King.
and for his dwell - ing and his throne will choose the pure in heart.
give us a pure and low - ly heart, a tem - ple fit for thee.

-The Gospel is comprised primarily of the words Christ himself spoke, and so we stand out of reverence for the good news that has been brought for us and all people.

Those who wish, make the sign of the cross with the right-thumb on the forehead, the lips, and the heart when the Gospel is announced, praying silently, God be in my head and in my thinking. God be in my lips and in my speaking. God be in my heart and my departing.-

The Gospel Reading Luke 18:9-14

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Luke.

People: Glory to you, O Christ.

Jesus told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

Priest: The Gospel of the Savior.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

-The Sermon or Homily helps us apply the words of the early prophets and Christ in our lives.-

The Sermon

The Rev. Nathan Biornstad
Rector, St. Wilfrid of York, Huntington Beach

A period of silent reflection follows the sermon.

-The Nicene Creed is the statement of what we believe. It is one of the most ancient and corporate confession of our faith, having been adopted by the first ecumenical council in the year 325. When we recite this creed we are joining a great heritage of the holy universal Church through the centuries.

Some people may choose to bow their heads at the verse, For us and for our salvation...and was made man. This gesture marks the mystery of the Incarnation as the central Christian message of God's love for the world.-

Please stand as you are able.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

-Prayer is offered for the Universal Church, the Nation and all in authority, the welfare of the world, concerns of the local community, for those who suffer or who are in any trouble, and for the departed.-

The Prayers of the People

Reader: Sally Drake

Happy are the people whose strength is in God! Let us come humbly before the Most High, praying,"
God be merciful, and hear our prayer."

God, be merciful to your Church. Forgive us our pride and the times we obscure your mercy. Give us
humility that we may generously give to you as you have given to us.

Silence

Intercessor: God be merciful,

People: **And hear our prayer.**

God, be merciful to our nation. Forgive us our pride and the times we have gloried in our own accomplishments. Give us humility that we may generously care for the orphans, the widows, and all those in need.

Silence

Intercessor: God be merciful,

People: And hear our prayer.

God, be merciful to us, those called to care for your creation. Forgive us our pride and the times we have polluted the springs and pools of water with which you have blessed us. Give us humility that we may generously address the challenges that face us.

Silence

Intercessor: God be merciful,

People: And hear our prayer.

God, be merciful to the residents of our community. Forgive us our pride and the times we fail to trust that you stand by us and give us the strength we need. Give us humility that we may generously address the challenges that face us.

Silence

Intercessor: God be merciful,

People: And hear our prayer.

God, be merciful to all those with broken hearts, bodies, and souls. Forgive us our pride and the times we have exalted ourselves above your suffering servants. Give us humility that we may generously love all your people. We pray for all those on the prayer list especially Rebecca, Lorraine, and Neville.

The congregation may add their own petitions and thanksgiving.

Silence

Intercessor: God be merciful,

People: And hear our prayer.

God, be merciful to all who have died especially Grace Nuzzi. Accept them into the glorious company of the communion of saints. Make for them a home in your dwelling forever.

Silence

Intercessor: God be merciful,

People: And hear our prayer.

Almighty God of wisdom and grace: Look favorably on your Church, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a bishop for this Diocese, and those who offer themselves as candidates, that we may receive a faithful pastor who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries.

Silence

Intercessor: God be merciful,

People: And hear our prayer.

Priest

O Gracious God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, the one, holy and undivided Trinity; God, Son & Spirit now and for ever. **Amen.**

Confession

Let us confess our sins to God.

**God of all mercy,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.**

We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

-The Peace is an extension of Christian greeting and teaching to love our neighbor as ourselves. It symbolizes our intent to forgive as we are forgiven, to live in peace with all people. Members are encouraged to greet one another with a sign of God's peace with the clasping of hands, a reverential bow, a hug, or a peace sign.-

The Peace

Priest: The peace of Christ be always with you.
People: **And also with you.**

Members of the congregation who are joining us via livestream are encouraged to post "Peace be with you" in the comments or to use the "like" or "love" reaction button to take part in the virtual exchange of God's peace with the rest of the congregation at this time.

Please be seated.

Welcome and Announcements

Stewardship Reflection

Kathleen Jensen

We are pleased to celebrate the following birthdays: Neville Bridgeford on Oct. 27th, Judy Ferkel on Oct. 28th, Debbie Richards on Oct. 29th, and Elizabeth Mackey on Nov. 1st.

Offertory Prayer

The People remain seated and say together:

Loving God, you alone are the source of every good gift. Everything we have, and all that we are, comes from you. Now, help us to be grateful, accountable, and, with praise and thanksgiving, to give of ourselves generously, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE TABLE

Offertory

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing
St. Stephen's Parish Choir

Ron Harris

-A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself. For Anglicans there are two great sacraments: Eucharist and Baptism.

As continuation of thousands of years of spiritual practice, talent, treasure, and oblations are offered before the altar in our response to God's care and nurture.-

Please stand as you are able.

Doxology

Old 100th

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow, Praise God all crea - tures,
here be - low. Praise God, you hosts in heav'n a -
bove; Praise God the Trin - i - ty of Love. A - men.

-The Sursum Corda (Lift up your hearts) is a form of introduction to prayer handed down over the centuries. This dialogue is an invitation for the people joining in the Eucharistic offering, to raise minds and hearts to "things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."

Priest: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to God.**

Priest: Let us give thanks.

People: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

-We praise God for the long arc of salvation history. We do not approach with petition but simply with grateful remembrance of all that God has done.-

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing. You made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love.

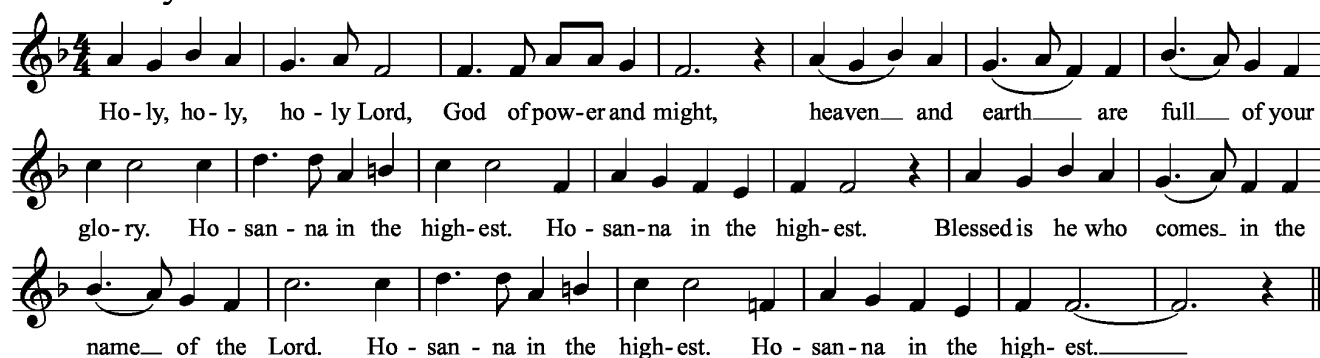
And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we say:

-The holiness of God is a strong theme in the Old Testament, present here in the Sanctus, which echoes the words of the high angels in the prophet Isaiah's vision of the dwelling place of God (Isaiah 6:1-3).

Our worshipful cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy," is coupled with the acclamation "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

Sanctus Hymn #S 125

Proulx



Standing or kneeling as you are able.

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God. Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Priest and people say together:

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice.

-The epiclesis is the point at which the church, through the voice of the Celebrant, asks God to make holy, 'sanctify', 'send', 'pour', 'breathe', both the gift of bread and wine and also the gathered community.-

Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.

In the fullness of time bring us, with Stephen and all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

-The fraction (breaking of the bread) is a crucial link between what has come before and what comes after it. Christ has offered his life for us, and the breaking of the bread makes it possible for all to share in that life.-

Priest: Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People: **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

-The outward and visible sign in the sacrament of the Eucharist is the bread and the wine. We eat and drink the sacramental foods. Through the inward and spiritual grace of this sacramental action we are reconstituted as Christ's body, infused with Christ's life, and empowered to be Christ's presence in the world.-

The Gifts of God for the People of God.
Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Please be seated.

All are welcome to receive communion. The table we set belongs to God. Wherever you find yourself on your spiritual journey you are welcome to receive the Bread and Wine made holy.

The church teaches that temporal isolation cannot constrain the sacrament's ineffable power. Calling us to "massive, corporate, spiritual communion,"

The Invitation to Holy Communion

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

Priest and People say together:

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Please be seated.

Please follow usher instructions for taking communion.

Communion

-In the post communion prayer we give thanks for the sacramental signs of Christ's presence to us and we ask God to empower and accompany us into the world to witness to God's love.-

Please stand as you are able.

Post Communion Prayer

Let us pray.

Holy and Eternal God,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Savior. Amen.

-The blessing is God's promise to be with us as we leave communal worship and return to the world to serve God and God's people.-

Blessing

-Processions have long been an important part of liturgical worship. At the conclusion of the service the retiring procession represents the carrying of the Gospel message into the world.

Those who wish to may bow in reverence as the cross passes to acknowledge Christ's sacrifice upon it.-

Closing Hymn #506

"Praise the Spirit in creation" (vs. 1-3)

Finnian

1. Praise the Spi - rit in cre - a - tion, breath of God, life's or - i - gin:
 2. Praise the Spi - rit, close com - pan - ion of nor in - most thoughts and ways;
 3. Praise the Spi - rit, who en - light - ened priests and pro - phets with the word;
 4. Tell of how the/a - scend - ed Je - sus armed a peo - ple for his own;
 5. Pray we then, O Lord the Spi - rit, on our lives de - scend in might;
 6. Praise, O praise the Ho - ly Spi - rit, praise the Fa - ther, praise the Word,
 Spi - rit, mov - ing on the wa - ters, quick - ening worlds to life with - in,
 who, in show - ing us God's won - ders, is him - self the pow'r to gaze;
 his the truth be - hind the wis - doms which as yet know not our Lord;
 how a hun - dred men and wo - men turned the known world up - side down,
 let your flame break out with - in us, fire our hearts and clear our sight,
 Source, and Truth, and In - spi - ra - tion, Trin - i - ty in deep ac - cord:
 source of breath to all things breath - ing, life in whom all lives be - gin.
 and God's will, to those who lis - ten, by a still small coice con - veys.
 by whose love and pow'r in Je - sus God him - self was seen and heard.
 to its dark and fur - thest cor - ners by the wind of hea - ven blown.
 till, white - hot in your pos - ses - sion, we, too, set the world a - light.
 through your voice which speaks with - in — us we, your crea - tures, call you Lord.

-The dismissal asserts the relationship between worship and living. It is a call to mission, a call to live the baptismal and Eucharistic life in the world.-

The Dismissal

Priest: Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People: Thanks be to God.

Prayers of the People taken from *Praying the Scriptures* by Jeremiah D. Williamson, ©2014 by Jeremiah D. Williamson. All Rights Reserved.

Spiritual Communion Prayer: Amended from a prayer written by Bishop Guy Erwin (ELCA)

From *The Hymnal 1982* #372 "Praise the living God!", Words: Medieval Jewish liturgy; tr. Max Landsberg (1845-1928) and Newton M. Mann (1836-1926). Music: *Leoni*, Hebrew melody; harm. *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 1875, alt. #656 "Blest are the pure in heart" Words: Sts. 1 and 3, John Keble (1792-1866), alt.; sts 2 and 4, William John Hall (1795-1861), alt. Music: *Franconia*, melody Johann Balthasar König (1691-1758); adapt. and harm. William Henry Havergal (1795-1870). #S 125 The Holy Eucharist *Sanctus*, Setting: From *A Community Mass*, Richard Proulx (b. 1937). #506 "Praise the Spirit in creation", Words: Michael Hewlett (b. 1916), alt. Music: *Finnian*, Christopher Dearnley (b. 1930)

Doxology — Music: Old 100th, melody from *Pseumes octante trois de David*, 1551, alt.; harm. After Louis Bourgeois (1510?-1561?).