St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Santa Clarita The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost — Proper 17 10:30am — August 31, 2025

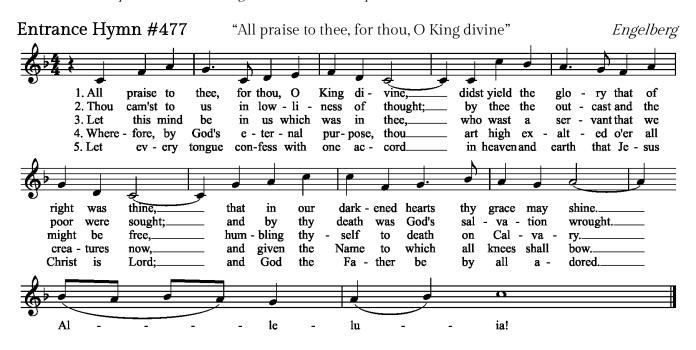
The Altar flowers are given to the glory of God by Catherine Gero in memory of Martin D. Balogh, forever in our hearts and thoughts.

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

-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.-

PreludeSicilienne
Brandon Coprich, flute, Judith Baity, piano
Gabriel Fauré

-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.-



-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.

God of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; 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 Jeremiah 2:4-13

A Reading from the Book of Jeremiah.

Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. Thus says the Lord: What wrong did your ancestors find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves? They did not say, "Where is the Lord who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that no one passes through, where no one lives?" I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things. But when you entered you defiled my land,

Reader: Ken Higginbotham

and made my heritage an abomination. The priests did not say, "Where is the Lord?" Those who handle the law did not know me; the rulers transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal, and went after things that do not profit. Therefore once more I accuse you, says the Lord, and I accuse your children's children. Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look, send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has ever been such a thing. Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.

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 81:1, 10-16 Reader: Cathy Gero

- Sing with joy to God our strength * 1 and raise a loud shout to the God of Jacob.
- I am the Lord your God, 10 who brought you out of the land of Egypt and said, * "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it."
- 11 And yet my people did not hear my voice, * and Israel would not obey me.
- So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their hearts, * 12 to follow their own devices.
- Oh, that my people would listen to me! * 13 that Israel would walk in my ways!
- 14 I should soon subdue their enemies * and turn my hand against their foes.
- 15 Those who hate the Lord would cringe before him, * and their punishment would last for ever.
- But Israel would I feed with the finest wheat * 16 and satisfy him with honey from the rock.

The Second Reading Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" Remember your leaders, those who spoke

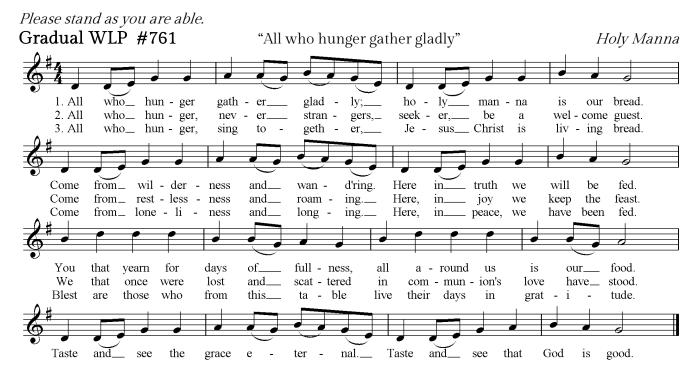
Reader: Cathy Gero

the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

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.-



-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 14:1, 7-14

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

People: Glory to you, O Christ.

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when

you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

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 Very Rev. Christopher Montella

Rector

Reader: Sheri Flay

A period of silent reflection follows the sermon.

Please stand as you are able.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God, the love that holds the world together;

We believe in Love, known to us in Jesus;

We believe in Jesus, who fed the multitudes,

Who taught God's kingdom of justice and peace,

Who breathed God's very spirit upon his friends;

We believe in God's Spirit, who moves in the world

To lead us, teach us, and empower us

To do the work of love today.

There are no barriers to love.

There is always more than enough love.

Love makes us, love heals us, love makes us grow.

God's love comes to us on its way to someone else.

We believe in God, who creates us in the image of Love.

Since God loves us so much,

We ought also to love one another. 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

My friends, God will never leave us or forsake us. Let us humbly appeal to our faithful God, saying,

"We offer to you, O God, a sacrifice of praise; we offer the fruit of our lips."

We pray for our leaders, those who speak your word to us, especially our Bishops and our Priests. May your whole Church listen for your voice and obey your words.

The congregation may add their own thanksgivings.

Silence

Intercessor: We offer to you, O God a sacrifice of praise;

People: We offer the fruit of our lips.

O God, you exalt the humble and humble the exalted. We pray that the leaders of the nations will serve their people in humility and manage their affairs with justice. May the poor and lowly be treated with respect and shown mercy.

Silence

Intercessor: We offer to you, O God a sacrifice of praise;

People: We offer the fruit of our lips.

You have created a beautiful planet, full of wondrous creatures and magnificent works. Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world around us.

Silence

Intercessor: We offer to you, O God a sacrifice of praise;

People: We offer the fruit of our lips.

We pray for all laborers: for those who work, that they might be fulfilled; for those in need of work, that they might find meaningful employment; for those who are struggling to make ends meet, that they might receive a fair wage for their labors. In labor and in rest, be glorified by all we do.

Silence

Intercessor: We offer to you, O God a sacrifice of praise;

People: We offer the fruit of our lips.

We pray for the strength to do your will. May we boldly and compassionately welcome the poor, the neglected, the vulnerable and the oppressed. May all of us know you as God our helper. We pray for all those on the prayer list, especially John, Kim, Debbie, Steve, Angie, Malcolm, Jeff, Linda, Coco, Felix, Robert, those injured and affected by the Minnesota school shooting,

The congregation may add their own petitions.

Silence

Intercessor: We offer to you, O God a sacrifice of praise;

People: We offer the fruit of our lips.

O God you invite those who have died, especially the victims of the school shooting, Fletcher Merkel and Harper Moyski, to feast at your heavenly banquet. We take great hope in the promise that not even death will cause you to leave us or forsake us.

Silence

Intercessor: We offer to you, O God a sacrifice of praise;

People: We offer the fruit of our lips.

A Prayer for Labor Day

Almighty God, you have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good; and, as we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

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 and Absolution

Priest: We reflect on the difficult times of the past week and seek the strength to become our

most compassionate selves.

Silence for reflection.

Priest: We have wounded your love.

People: O God, heal us.

We stumble in the darkness. Light of the world, transfigure us. We forget that we are your home. Spirit of God, dwell in us.

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.

Priest: God's grace is for you; you are loved and forgiven. 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

We are pleased to celebrate the following birthdays: Sarah Simmons on Aug. 31st, Julie Hagerty on Sept. 1st, Sheri Flay on Sept. 2nd, Harrison Firta on Sept. 3rd, and Bob Gregor on Sept. 5th. We also celebrate the wedding anniversary of Mary Jo and Ken Higginbotham on Sept. 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

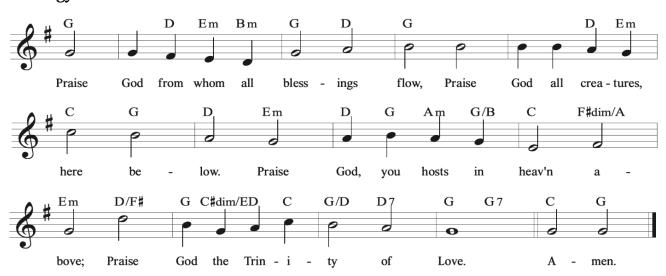
Offertory

O Lord Most Holy César Franck, arr. by Bryceson Treharne Joshua Wentz & Brandon Coprich, vocalists Judith Baity, piano

-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.-

Doxology Old 100th



-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.-

All thanks and praise are yours at all times and in all places, our true and loving God; through Jesus Christ, your eternal Word, the Wisdom from on high by whom you created all things. You laid the foundations of the world and enclosed the sea when it burst out from the womb; You brought forth all creatures of the earth and gave breath to humankind.

Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing, all you create is a sign of hope for our journey; And so as the morning stars sing your praises we join the heavenly beings and all creation as we shout with joy:

-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," is coupled with the acclamation "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."-



Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all, your Word has never been silent; you called a people to yourself, as a light to the nations, you delivered them from bondage and led them to a land of promise. Of your grace, you gave Jesus to be human, to share our life, to proclaim the coming of your holy reign and give himself for us, a fragrant offering.

Through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, you have freed us from sin, brought us into your life, reconciled us to you, and restored us to the glory you intend for us.

We thank you that on the night before he died for us Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, gave it to his friends and said: "Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper Jesus took the cup of wine, said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said: "Drink this, all of you: this cup is the new Covenant in my Blood, poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And so, remembering all that was done for us: the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and ascension, longing for Christ's coming in glory, and presenting to you these gifts your earth has formed and human hands have made, we acclaim you, O Christ:

Priest and People
Dying, you destroyed our death.
Rising, you restored our life.
Christ Jesus, come in glory!

-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.-

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine that they may be to us the Body and Blood of your Christ. Grant that we, burning with your Spirit's power, may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ, and in the fullness of time gather us with blessed Stephen, and all your people, into the joy of our true eternal home.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, we worship you our God and Creator in voices of unending praise.

Priest and People

Blessed are you now and for ever. Amen.

Now, as Jesus taught us, we pray,

Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

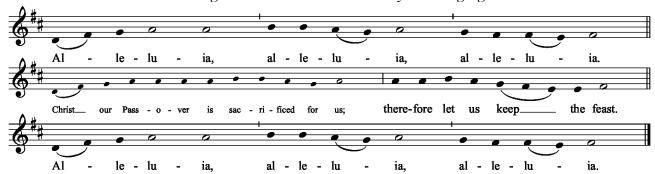
-The fraction (breaking of the bread) is a crucial link between what has come before and what comes after it. Christ has offered his life for us, and the breaking of the bread makes it possible for all to share in that life.-

Please remain standing during the Fraction Anthem.

Fraction Hym #S 154

Hurd

Cantor will sing the refrain first, followed by the congregation.



-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 Music Down By The Riverside Traditional, arr. by Bernard Dewagtage Brandon Coprich, alto saxophone, Judith Baity, piano

-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.

God of abundance, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of salvation; you have united us with Christ and one another; and you have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.

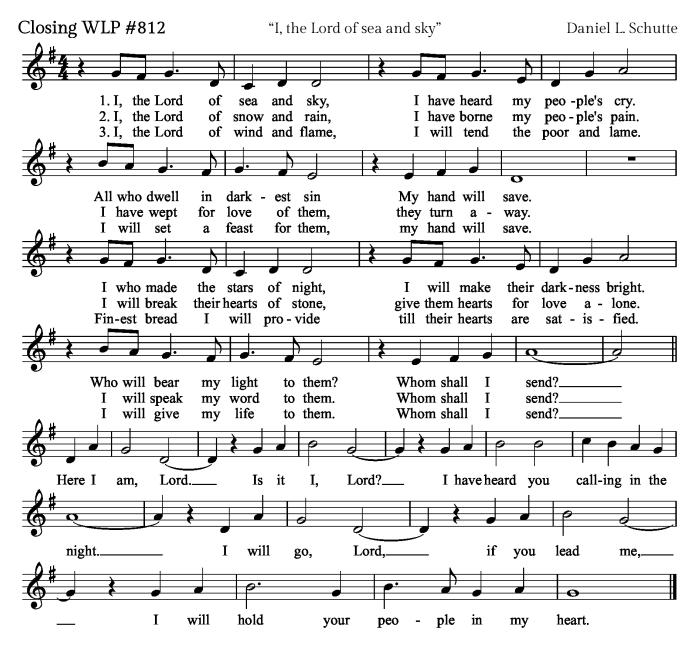
-The blessing is God's promise to be with us as we leave communal worship and return to the world to serve God and God's people.-

Blessing

May God give you grace never to sell yourself short; Grace to risk something big for something good; Grace to remember that the world is too dangerous for anything but truth, and too small for anything but Love. And the blessing of God Almighty, the one, holy and undivided Trinity be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

-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.-



-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.

Thanks be to God. People:

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Spiritual Communion Prayer, St. Alphonsus de Liguort, 1996-1787

From The Hyman 1992-8613 Thy highdon concer (O Golf', Words Lewis Hensley (1824—1903) alt. Music, St. Cecelia, Leighton George Hayne (1836—1833) Copyright: Words by permission of Oxford University Press, #488 *Be thou my vision* Words Irish, ca. 700; versified Mary Elizabeth Byrne (1880—1931); p. Eleanor H. Hull (1880—1932), alt. Music, Stare, Irish hellad melody, adapt. The Church Hymnary, 1927; harm. David Evans (1874—1948) Copyright: Words This hymn appears courtesy of the Estate of Eleanor Hull and Chatto & Windus Lidwisch Byrne (1880—1931); p. Eleanor H. Hull (1880—1931); p. Eleanor H. Hull (1880—1932); p. Eleanor H.