SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



The Twenty-fifth Sunday After Pentecost

September 15th, 2026

9:30 AM in the Church

The Rev. Stephanie E. Parker

Rector

Welcome to our Church

WELCOME

to

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

We are delighted you are seeking God in this special place. We want you to know that wherever you are on the journey of faith, you are welcome to ask your questions here.

Services are available: Recent services are available on our website:

https://stpaulwilkesboro.org

Newsletters: Sign-up today to receive our weekly electronic newsletter! Email the church office at office@stpaulwilkesboro.org to have your name added. If you would like a printed copy of the newsletter mailed, please call the office.

We extend a special thanks today to all that have been so generous with their time and talents in making this service possible.

200 W. Cowles St., P. O. Box 95, Wilkesboro, NC 28697
336-667-4231
www.stpaulwilkesboro.org
E-mail: office@stpaulwilkesboro.org
Pastoral Emergency Line: 336-482-6800

ONLINE GIVING QR CODE:
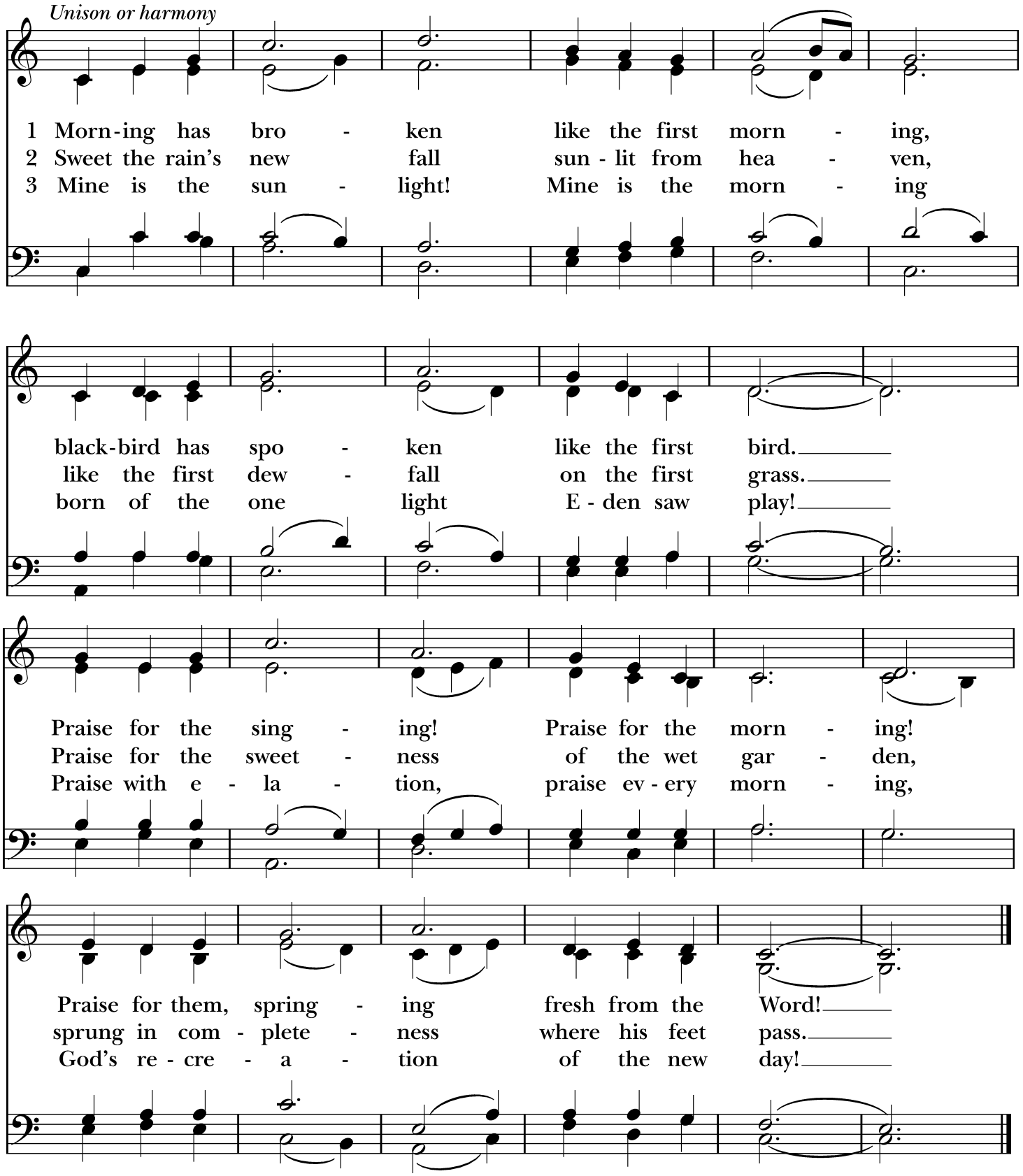
The Gathering

Prelude

For the Beauty of the Earth

Welcome and Announcements

Processional Hymn #8 Morning Has Broken



Words: Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965), alt. By permission of David Higham Associates Limited, London. Music: *Bunessan*, Gaelic melody; harm. Alec Wyton (b. 1921). Harmonization Copyright © by The Church Pension Fund.

Opening Acclamation

Presider Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

Presider Let us pray:

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 Lord. Amen.

Glory To God S-280

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's 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.**

The Collect

Presider: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Presider: Let us pray.

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading — Wisdom of Solomon 6:17-20

The beginning of wisdom is the most sincere desire for instruction,
and concern for instruction is love of her,
and love of her is the keeping of her laws,
and giving heed to her laws is assurance of immortality,
and immortality brings one near to God;
so the desire for wisdom leads to a kingdom.

The Response **Psalm 90:1-8, 12**

Domine, refugium

Lord, you have been our refuge *
from one generation to another.

Before the mountains were brought forth,
or the land and the earth were born, *
from age to age you are God.

You turn us back to the dust and say, *
"Go back, O child of earth."

For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past *
and like a watch in the night.

You sweep us away like a dream; *
we fade away suddenly like the grass.

In the morning it is green and flourishes; *
in the evening it is dried up and withered.

For we consume away in your displeasure; *
we are afraid because of our ingratitude and waste.

Our iniquities you have set before you, *
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance

So teach us to number our days *
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
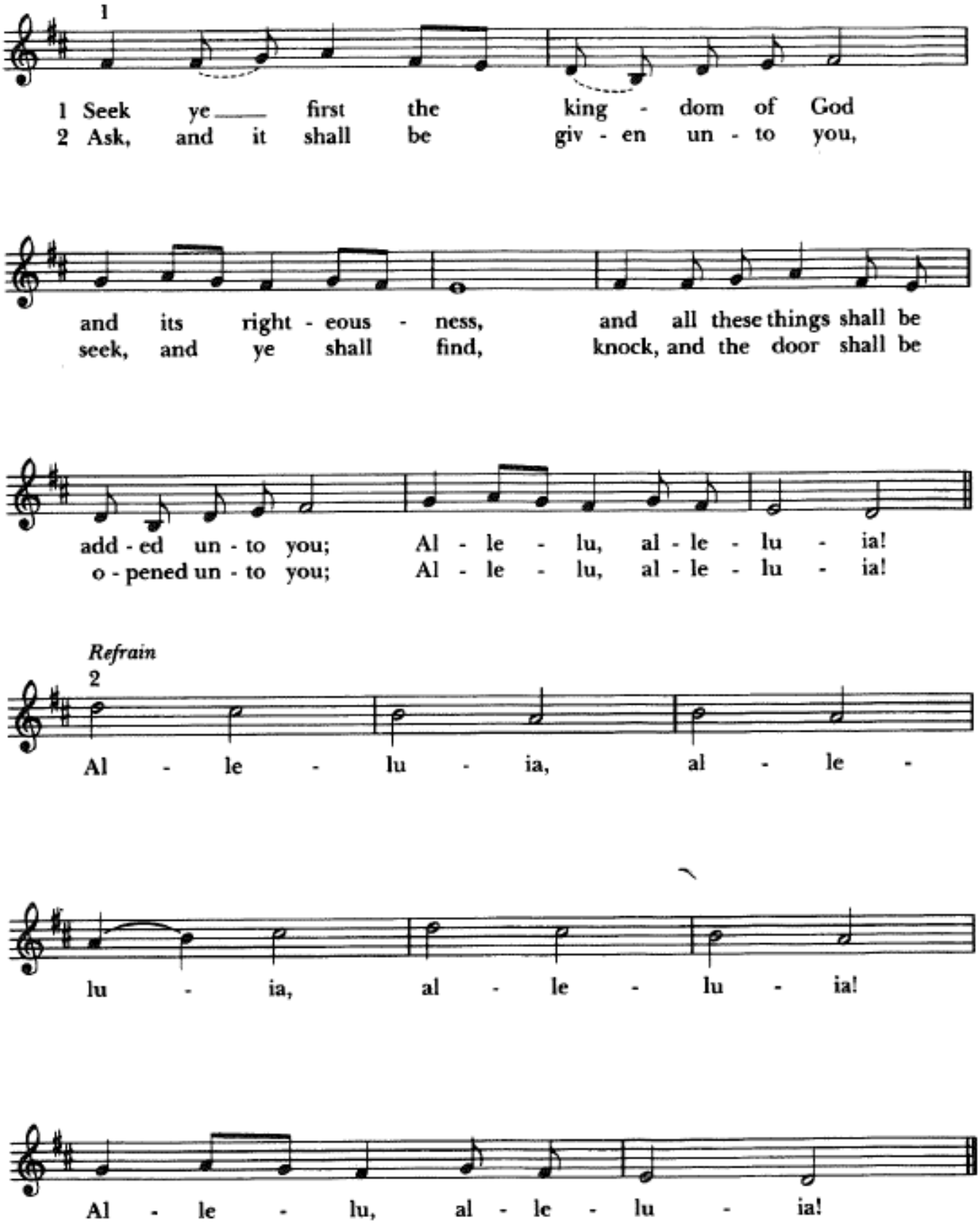
Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s People.

All: Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are most comfortable.

Sequence Hymn #711 Seek ye First



Words: St. 1, Matthew 6:33; adapt. Karen Lafferty (20th cent.). St. 2, Matthew 7:7.
Stanza 2 is not part of the hymn as originally written.

The Gospel — Matthew 25:14-30

Presider: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said, "It is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

Presider: The Gospel of the Lord

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

All are seated.

The Sermon — *The Rev. Stephanie E. Parker*

A time of silence following the sermon.

Please stand as you are comfortable.

The 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.
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
who 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.

Prayers of the People

Plenty Good Room

Leader: Jesus said, “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places.” Trusting in God’s abundance and welcome, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all creation.

Leader: Gracious God, you have made plenty good room for us in your household. Inspire your church to be a place of welcome, generosity, and love. We thank you for the resources you have entrusted to us, and we pray for wisdom to use them in service of your mission.

People: **Thank you for your Abundant Life.**

Leader: God of community, you bind us together in relationships of care and compassion. Strengthen the bonds within this congregation and guide us to extend hospitality to our neighbors near and far.

People: **Thank you for your Abundant Life.**

Leader: God of abundance, you invite us to respond with gratitude for all your gifts. Bless this Financial Giving Invitation, that our pledges of time, talent, and treasure may be faithful signs of our trust in you.

People: **Thank you for your Abundant Life.**

Leader: God of creation, you have made a world with plenty good room for all living things. Teach us to care for the earth and to share its resources with justice and joy.

People: **Thank you for your Abundant Life.**

Leader: God of mercy, your dwelling place has room for all who suffer. Be present with those who are sick, lonely, grieving, or in any kind of need [*especially those you would name silently or aloud*]. Surround them with your healing and your peace.

People: **Thank you for your Abundant Life.**

Leader: God of hope, you prepare a place for us in your eternal home. We remember before you those who have died, [*especially those that you would name silently or aloud*], confident that they now rest in your embrace.

People: **Thank you for your Abundant Life.**

Presider: Loving God, you call us into your Abundant life and promise that there is plenty good room for all your children and plentiful resources for all to have enough. Hear our prayers and accept the offerings of our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Confession of Sin

Please stand or kneel as you are most comfortable.

Let us confess our sins against God and one another.

Moment of silence observed.

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name.
Amen.

Absolution

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

The Peace

✧***"The Peace"*** *is a Christian tradition deriving its roots from Jesus himself who greeted people saying, "Peace be with you." "The Peace" may feel awkward if you are new or an introvert or trying not to be noticed. We take this portion of our worship seriously as we live in a deeply divided world full of violence. These actions in God's house model what we are called to do in the world.*

Presider: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: And also with you.

Presider: Invitation to the Great Thanksgiving

Presider: Walk in love...

The Great Thanksgiving

Please stand as you are most comfortable *Eucharistic Prayer D, BCP page 372*

Presider	All things come of thee, O Lord
People	**And of thine own have we given thee**
Presider	The Lord be with you.
People	**And also with you.**
Presider	Lift up your hearts.
People	**We lift them to the Lord**
Presider	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People	**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is truly right to glorify you, Father, and to give you thanks; for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and for ever.

Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance.

Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we say,

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest

Please remain standing or kneel here.

We acclaim you, holy Lord, glorious in power. Your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love. You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in participation with you, our Creator, we might love and serve all your creatures.

When our disobedience took us far from you, you did not abandon us to the power of death. In your mercy you came to our help, so that in seeking you we might find you. Again and again you called us into covenant with you, and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation.

Father, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of his mother Mary, he lived as one of us, yet without hostility or judgement. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. To fulfill your hope for an end to violence, he gave himself up to death; and, rising from the grave, destroyed death, and made the whole creation new.

And, that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for him who loved, lived and rose for us, he sent the Holy Spirit, his own first gift for those who believe, to complete his work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.

When the hour had come for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end; at supper with them he took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's teaching, healing, death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your righthand, awaiting his coming in glory; and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you.

We praise you, we bless you,
we give thanks to you,
and we pray to you, Lord our God.

Presider: Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us, and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name.

Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic Church, redeemed by the love of your Christ. Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace.

Remember all your people, and those who seek your truth.

And grant that we may find our inheritance with the Blessed Mary, with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, 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.

Fraction

We are one bread, one body, one spirit. Alleluia.

Let us love one another as Christ loves us—Alleluia!

The Invitation to Communion

Presider: The gifts of God for the people of God…

God's holy gifts for God's holy people.

This is the table of the Lord. It is made ready for those who love him and who want to love him more. So come, you who have much faith and you have little, you who have been here often and you have not been here long, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come, for it is the Lord who invites you.

You will now have three ways to receive communion:

In one kind--this means you receive only the bread or only the wine. Receive the bread by extending your hands, palm upward, when the presider comes to you and then leaving the rail or crossing your hands over your chest when the chalice comes to you.

To receive the wine only, cross your hands when the bread is presented and then drink from the chalice by gently assisting the chalice bearer by grasping the base of the chalice lightly to help guide it to your lips.

Intinction (having the bread dipped in the wine and placed in your hand) is only done by the presider from the intinction tray. To receive communion by intinction simply keep your hands down by your sides as we have been doing. Then raise them to take intincted bread between thumb and forefinger.

In two kinds--this is where you consume both the bread and the wine either by receiving the bread and then drinking from the chalice or by Intinction.

There is no intinction by multiple individuals from the chalice.

Gluten free wafers available upon request.

Communion Music

Chorale on Finlandia

Post Communion Prayer

Presider: Let us pray,

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
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 Lord. Amen.

The Blessing
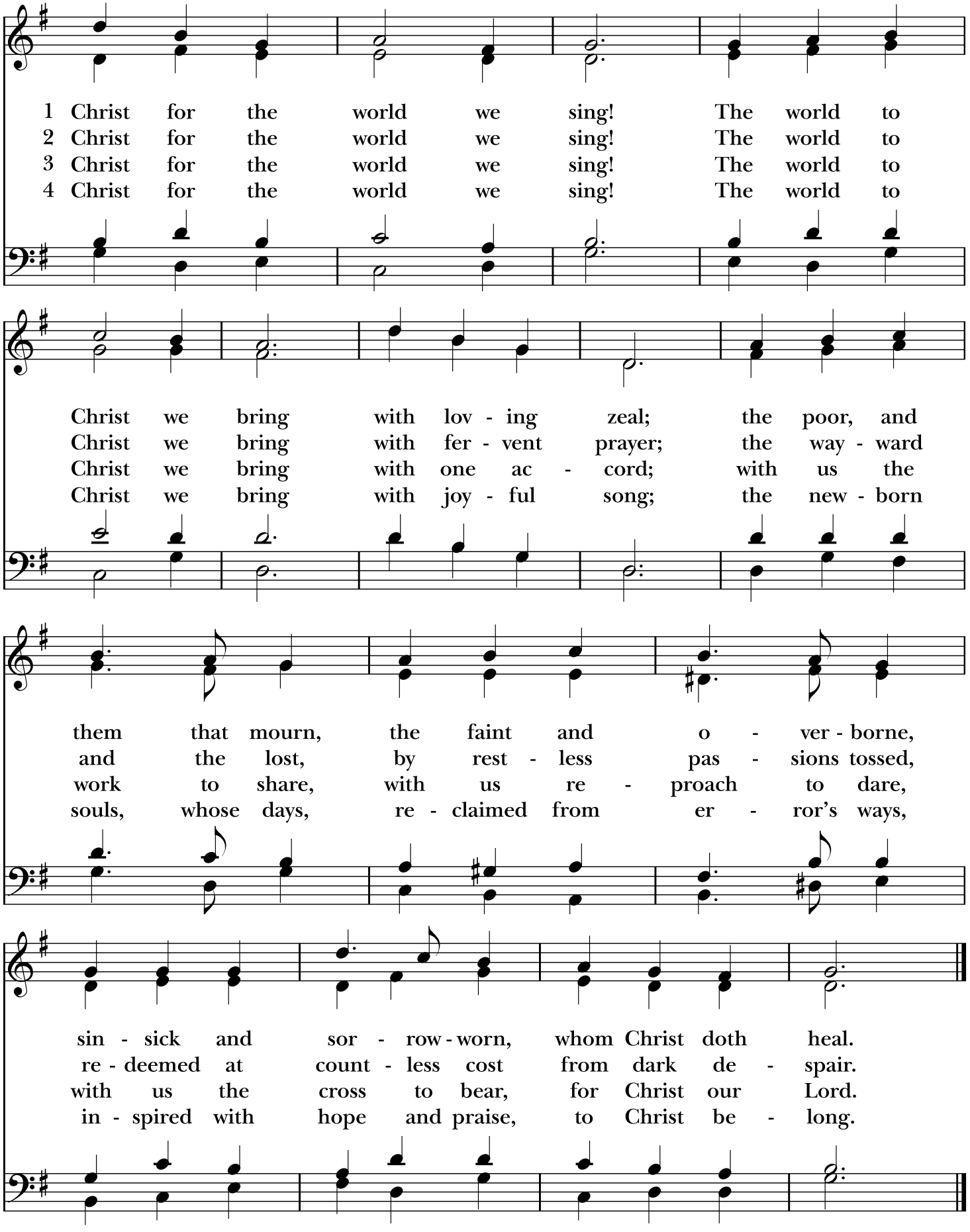
As you go from here,
remember to love.
For love is what God asks of us;
it is the very heart and soul
of what it means to follow Jesus Christ.
So go from here to love and serve God
by loving and serving those you meet.

And may God—
who loved us first, and who shows us what real love looks like—
be with you and among you
wherever you find yourself in the coming week.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you this day and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Please stand or kneel as you are comfortable.

Recessional Hymn #537 Christ for the world we sing



Words: Samuel Wolcott (1813-1886). Music: *Moscow*, melody Felice de Giardini (1716-1796); harm. *The New Hymnal*, 1916 based on *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 1875, and Lowell Mason (1792-1892).

The Dismissal

Presider: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
People: Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Postlude

Trois Piéces Op. 29 *Gabriel Pierné*

PRAYER LIST

Please remember in your prayers: All who are ill or unemployed and those who are on our prayer list.

Short-term

Carol Canter, Ann Reid, Elenor Wilborn, Sloan Bodford, Willie Barber, Kim Tetzlaff, Doug Merritt, Shannon Ryan, Jamie Tate

Long-term

Cade Gibbs, Ray Call, Steve Jackson, Ken Asel, Shane Jenkins, Da'Shon Horton, Rose Andrews, Margo Hurd

Armed Forces

Let us pray for the safety of **all our troops**, especially John Craine, Micha Duerk, Faith Lankford, Cole Griffith, Zach Necessary, Jason Westmeyer, and all others who serve throughout the world.

Prayer requests can be submitted through the prayer request form by scanning the QR code below, or by contacting the office.



November 16th - Gwen Temple
November 19th - Riley Canter
November 20th - Kathi Johnson
November 20th - Maria Curtis

November 20th - Justin & Bobba Norman



Serving Today

Altar Guild: Jim & Shelia Burch, Mike & Mary Southwell

Reader/Server: Linda Schneider

Usher: TBD

Bread Baker: Linda Schneider

Streaming Ministry: Rachel Minick, Gerry Peabody

Vestry Lock-Up for November: Scott Jessee

The Rt. Rev José McLoughlin
Bishop of the Diocese of Western North Carolina

St. Paul's Vestry 2026

Jeff Beard
Jim Burch, *Jr. Warden*
Chuck Forester
Scott Jessee, *Sr. Warden*
Tana Myers
Diane Peabody

Bill Harris, *Secretary*
Linda Schneider, *Treasurer*
The Rev. Stephanie E. Parker, *Rector*
rector@stpaulwilkesboro.org
Russell Stinson, *Director of Music*
Penny Farmer, *Finance Administrator*
Robyn Setzer, *Parish Administrator*
office@stpaulwilkesboro.org
Dean Carlton, *Sexton*