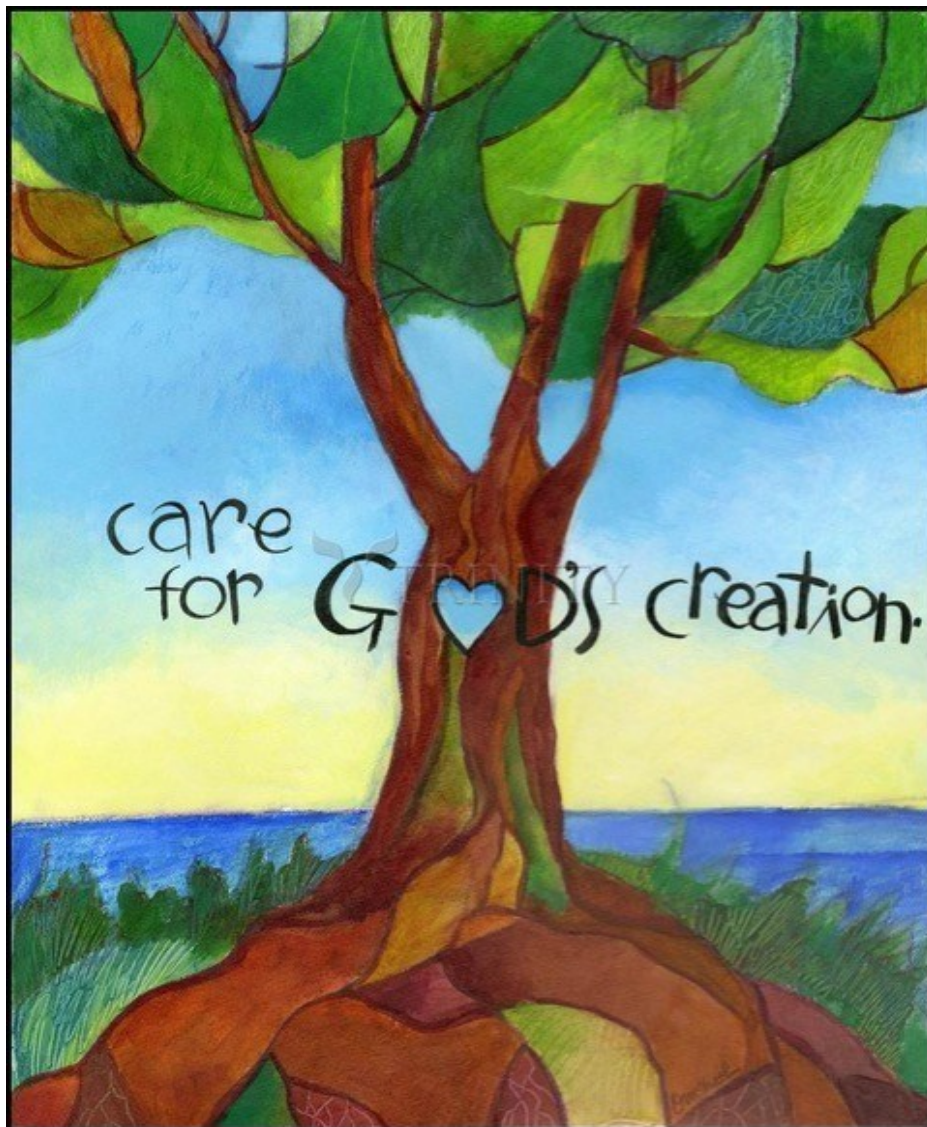


SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 18th, 2025

9:30 AM in the Labyrinth

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

Welcome and Announcements

Processional Hymn #8 Morning Has Broken

Unison or harmony

1 Morn-ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing,
2 Sweet the rain's new fall sun - lit from hea - ven,
3 Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing

black-bird has spo - ken like the first bird._____
like the first dew - fall on the first grass._____
born of the one light E - den saw play!_____

Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the morn - ing!
Praise for the sweet - ness of the wet gar - den,
Praise with e - la - tion, praise ev - ery morn - ing,

Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word!_____
sprung in com - plete - ness where his feet pass._____
God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day!_____

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 Alleluia, Christ is risen.

People **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

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.**

Gloria

**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.

Holy God, your mercy is over all your works, and in the web of life each creature has its role and place. We praise you for ocelot and owl, cactus and kelp, lichen and whale; we honor you for whirlwind and lava, tide and topsoil, cliff and marsh. Give us hearts and minds eager to care for your planet, humility to recognize all creatures as your beloved ones, justice to share the resources of the earth with all its inhabitants, and love not limited by our ignorance. This we pray in the name of Jesus, who unifies what is far off and what is near, and in whom, by grace and the working of your Holy Spirit, all things hold together. **Amen.**

Please be seated

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Acts 11:1-18

Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' But I replied, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But a second time the voice answered from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.' This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.' And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

The Response

Psalms 148

Laudate Dominum

Hallelujah!

Praise the LORD from the heavens; *
praise him in the heights.

Praise him, all you angels of his; *
praise him, all his host.

Praise him, sun and moon; *
praise him, all you shining stars.

Praise him, heaven of heavens, *
and you waters above the heavens.

Let them praise the Name of the LORD; *
for he commanded, and they were created.

He made them stand fast for ever and ever; *
he gave them a law which shall not pass away.

Praise the LORD from the earth, *
you sea-monsters and all deeps;

Fire and hail, snow and fog, *
tempestuous wind, doing his will;

Mountains and all hills, *
fruit trees and all cedars;

Wild beasts and all cattle, *
creeping things and winged birds;

Kings of the earth and all peoples, *
princes and all rulers of the world;

Young men and maidens, *
old and young together.

Let them praise the Name of the LORD, *
**for his Name only is exalted,
his splendor is over earth and heaven.**

He has raised up strength for his people
and praise for all his loyal servants, *
the children of Israel, a people who are near him.
Hallelujah!

Second Reading

Revelation 21:1-6

I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

"See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them as their God;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away."

And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life."

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 #412 Earth and All Stars



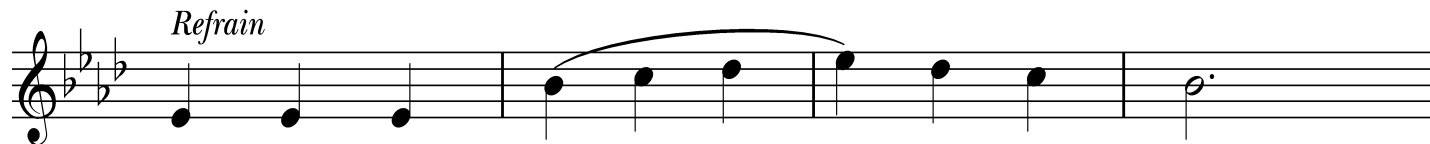
1	Earth and all stars,	loud rush - ing	plan - ets,	sing to the
2	Hail, wind, and rain,	loud blow - ing	snow - storms,	sing to the
3	Trum - pet and pipes,	loud clash - ing	cym - bals,	sing to the
4	En - gines and steel,	loud pound - ing	ham - mers,	sing to the
5	Class - rooms and labs,	loud boil - ing	test - tubes,	sing to the
6	Know - ledge and truth,	loud sound - ing	wis - dom,	sing to the



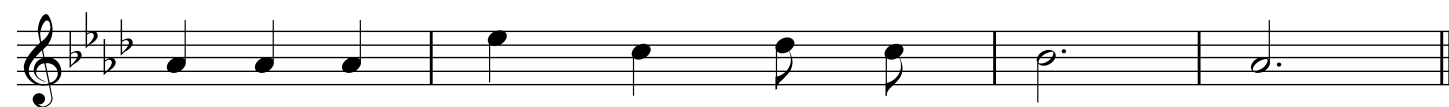
1	Lord _____	a new song!	O vic - to - ry,
2	Lord _____	a new song!	Flow - ers and trees,
3	Lord _____	a new song!	Harp, lute, and lyre,
4	Lord _____	a new song!	Lime - stone and beams,
5	Lord _____	a new song!	Ath - lete and band,
6	Lord _____	a new song!	Daugh - ter and son,



1	loud shout - ing	ar - my,	sing to the	Lord _____	a new song!
2	loud rus - tling	dry leaves,	sing to the	Lord _____	a new song!
3	loud hum - ming	cel - los,	sing to the	Lord _____	a new song!
4	loud build - ing	work - ers,	sing to the	Lord _____	a new song!
5	loud cheer - ing	peo - ple,	sing to the	Lord _____	a new song!
6	loud pray - ing	mem - bers,	sing to the	Lord _____	a new song!



He hath done mar - vel - ous things.



I, too, will praise him with a new song!

The Gospel

John 1:1-5

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

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

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.

An Affirmation of Faith
(the Ionian Creed)

**We believe that God is present
in the darkness before dawn;
in the waiting and uncertainty
where fear and courage join hands,
conflict and caring link arms,
and the sun rises over barbed wire.**

**We believe in a with-us God
who sits down in our midst
to share our humanity.**

**We affirm a faith
that takes us beyond a safe place:
into action, into vulnerability
and onto the streets.**

**We commit ourselves to work for change
and put ourselves on the line;
to bear responsibility, take risks,
live powerfully
and face humiliation;
to stand with those on the edge;
to choose life and be used by the Spirit
for God's new community of hope.**

Amen.

Prayers of the People

Blessed God, whose love calls the whole creation into covenant with you, and who puts in our hands responsibility for the care of the earth and its creatures: we pray for all to whom you have given life and being, saying:

Merciful God, help us keep your planet and people in peace.

For the well-being of the earth; for its resources of water, air, light, and soil, that they may be tended for the good of all creatures, we pray:

Merciful God, help us keep your planet and people in peace.

For the waters of the earth; for their careful use and conservation, that we may have the will and the ability to keep them clean and pure, we pray:

Merciful God, help us keep your planet and people in peace.

For the mineral and energy resources of the planet, that we may learn sustainable consumption and sound care of the environment from which they come, we pray:

Merciful God, help us keep your planet and people in peace.

For the animals of the earth, wild and domestic, large and very small, that they may know the harmony of the relationship that sustains all life, we pray:

Merciful God, help us keep your planet and people in peace.

For the creatures of the earth who do us harm and those whose place in your creation we do not understand or welcome, that we may see them as beloved creatures of God, we pray:

Merciful God, help us keep your planet and people in peace.

For all those engaged in conservation, in agriculture and ranching, in aquaculture and fishing, in mining and industry, and in forestry and timber-harvesting, that the health, fruitfulness, and beauty of the natural world may be sustained alongside human activity, we pray:

Merciful God, help us keep your planet and people in peace.

For the creatures and the human beings of your world who are ill, or in danger, pain, or special need, and for all who suffer from the unjust, violent, or wasteful use of the earth's resources or their devastation by war, that all may one day live in communities of justice and peace, we pray:

Merciful God, help us keep your planet and people in peace.

For the gifts of science and technology and for those who practice in these skills, that they may be wise, visionary, and compassionate in their work, we pray:

Merciful God, help us keep your planet and people in peace.

For the creatures and the people of the earth whose lives and deaths have contributed to the fruitful abundance of this planet, we pray:

Merciful God, help us keep your planet and people in peace.

Presider: Gracious God:

Grant that your people may have in them the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, and guide us into harmony of relationship through loving-kindness and the wise use of all that you have given; for you are drawing all things into communion with you and with each other by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Confession of Sin

Let us confess our sins against God and God's creation:

Silence

Holy and merciful God,

**we confess that we have failed to honor you
by rightly claiming our kinship with all your creatures.**

**We have walked heavily on your earth,
overused and wasted its resources,
taken for granted its beauty and abundance,
and treated its inhabitants unjustly,
holding future generations hostage to our greed.**

Have mercy on us and forgive us our sin.

**Renew in us the resolve to keep and conserve your earth
as you desire and intend,
with grateful and compassionate hearts.**

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

Offertory

Offertory Anthem

All Creatures of Our God and King

Ralph Vaughn Williams

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.

In the multitude of your saints you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses, that we might rejoice in their fellowship, and run with endurance the race that is set before us; and together with them, receive the crown of glory that never fades away.

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 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 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."

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand, 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.

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.**

Fraction

We are one bread, one body, one spirit.

Alleluia.

Therefore let us keep the feast.

Alleluia.

The Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

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

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Arr. Margaret Bonds

Carla Bowers—soloist

Post Communion Prayer

Presider: Let us pray,

Eternal God, the light of all who know you, thank you for the gifts of bread and wine that fill our hearts with your love. As we go back into the world in peace and courage, help us speak when many keep silent, help us stand for what is right when many sit with indifference. Increase our faith and justice, until your kingdom comes and heaven and earth rejoice in everlasting glory, through your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Blessing

Presider: Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love. Love the animals: God has given them the rudiments of thought and joy untroubled. Do not trouble it, don't harass them, don't deprive them of their happiness, don't work against God's intent. Live without fear the creator who made all things loves us and all the world.

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

Please stand or kneel as you are comfortable.

Recessional Hymn #507 Praise the Spirit in Creation

verses 1-3



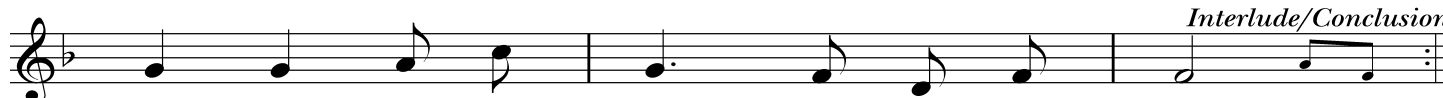
1 Praise the Spi - rit in cre - a - tion, breath of God, life's or - i -
2 Praise the Spi - rit, close com - pan - ion of our in - most thoughts and
3 Praise the Spi - rit, who en - light - ened priests and pro - phets with the
4 Tell of how the a - scend - ed Je - sus armed a peo - ple for his
5 Pray we then, O Lord the Spi - rit, on our lives de - scend in
6 Praise, O praise the Ho - ly Spi - rit, praise the Fa - ther, praise the



1 gin: Spi - rit, mov - ing on the wa - ters, quick - ening
2 ways; who, in show - ing us God's won - ders, is him -
3 word; his the truth be - hind the wis - doms which as
4 own; how a hun - dred men and wo - men turned the
5 might; let your flame break out with - in us, fire our
6 Word, Source, and Truth, and In - spi - ra - tion, Trin - i -



1 worlds to life with - in, source of breath to all things
2 self the power to gaze; and God's will, to those who
3 yet know not our Lord; by whose love and power, in
4 known world up - side down, to its dark and fur - thest
5 hearts and clear our sight, till, white - hot in your pos -
6 ty in deep ac - cord: through your voice which speaks with -



1 breath - ing, life in whom all lives be - gin.
2 lis - ten by a still small voice con - veys.
3 Je - sus God him - self was seen and heard.
4 cor - ners by the wind of hea - ven blown.
5 ses - sion, we, too, set the world a - light.
6 in us we, your crea - tures, call you Lord.



Words: Michael Hewlett (b. 1916), alt. By permission of Oxford University Press. Music: *Julion*, David Hurd (b. 1950).
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The Dismissal

Presider: Let us go forth rejoicing in the glory of God's creation.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

People: Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!



**Service curated from BCP, and Liturgical Materials for Honoring God in Creation.*

PRAYER LIST

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

Short-term

Richard Canter, Jason Williams, Jennifer Gates Icenhour, Tracee Smith

Long-term

Cassie Minton, Shane Jenkins, Erwin McKenzie, Michael Gamboa, Da'Shon Horton, Kaye Hall, Marianne Beamon, Cathy Welch, Bev Cook, Chris Privette, Dennis Johnson, Jacque Quick, Craig Freas, Mary Iva Gray, Don Dorsten, Aletha Johnson, Hannah Everson, Steve Jackson, Ryan Marlow, Dot Beamon, Ken Asel, Julius Parks & Family

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, or by contacting the office.





May 20th—Betsy Almoney

May 21st—Susan Shaw

May 24th—Carl Yale

May 24th—Luke Sturdivant

May 21st—Stanley & Susan Dudek

May 21st—Ryan & Rachel Minick

May 21st—David & Connie McNeill



Serving Today

Altar Guild: Laurie Love, Reba Whittington, Kendall Forrester

Acolyte/Reader: Laurie Love

Usher: Bob Houghton

Bread Bakers: Mark Williams & Ben Staley

Vestry Lock-Up for May: Jeff Beard



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

St. Paul's Vestry 2025

Jeff Beard

Chuck Forester, Jr. Warden

Ruth Harris

Julie Koch

Scott Jessee, Sr. Warden

Tana Myers

Diane Peabody

Bill Harris, *Secretary*

Drew Mayberry *Treasurer*

The Rev. Stephanie E. Parker, *Rector*
rector@stpaulwilkesboro.org

Russell Stinson, *Director of Music*

Roosevelt Carlton, *Sexton*

Penny Farmer, *Finance Administrator*

Robyn Setzer, *Parish Administrator*