ST. STEPHEN'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF RIDGEFIELD

Belonging with purpose

Our Mission: Embracing and living God's commandment to love our neighbors through worship, stewardship, and service to others.

The Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

November 8, 2026 • 10:00 A.M.

Prelude and Welcome

All stand and join in singing **Hymn 427** *Laudes Domini*

1 When morning gilds the skies,
my heart, awaking, cries,
may Jesus Christ be praised!
When evening shadows fall,
this rings my curfew call,
may Jesus Christ be praised!

2 When mirth for music longs,
this is my song of songs:
may Jesus Christ be praised!
God's holy house of prayer
hath none that can compare with:
Jesus Christ be praised!

3 No lovelier antiphon
in all high heaven is known
than, Jesus Christ be praised!
There to the eternal Word
the eternal psalm is heard:
may Jesus Christ be praised!

4 Ye nations of mankind,
in this your concord find:
may Jesus Christ be praised!
Let all the earth around
ring joyous with the sound:
may Jesus Christ be praised!

5 Sing, suns and stars of space,
sing, ye that see his face,
sing, Jesus Christ be praised!
God's whole creation o'er,
both now and evermore
shall Jesus Christ be praised!

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

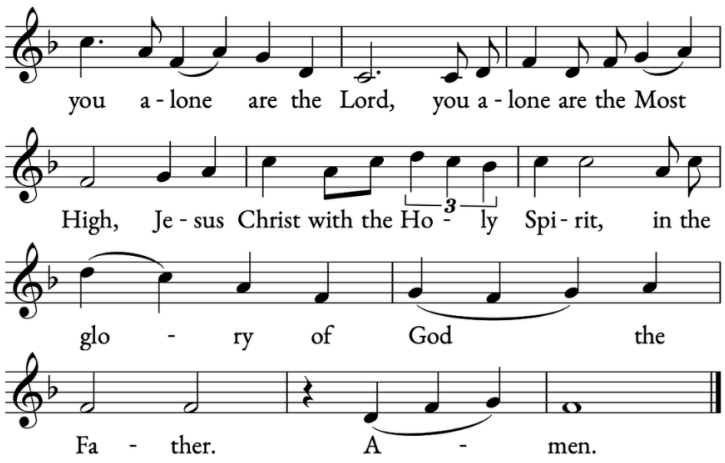
All join in **The Collect for Purity**

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 Lord. Amen.

As we sing, children are invited to follow Storytime Leaders down to the Choir Room.

All sing the **Gloria in excelsis** S-280 Robert Powell





Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Let us pray. O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

All sit for **A Reading from the Prophet Amos**
Thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord:
Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord!
Why do you want the day of the Lord?
It is darkness, not light;
as if someone fled from a lion,
and was met by a bear;
or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall,
and was bitten by a snake.
Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?
I hate, I despise your festivals,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them;
and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals
I will not look upon.
Take away from me the noise of your songs;
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.
But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an everflowing stream. *Amos 5:18-24*

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Response *read by all*
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. *Wisdom 6:17-20*

All stand and sing **Sequence Hymn 596** *Komm, O Komm du Geist des Lebens*

1 Judge eternal, throned in splendor,
Lord of lords and King of kings,
with thy living fire of judgment
purge this land of bitter things;
solace all its wide dominion
with the healing of thy wings.

2 Still the weary folk are pining
for the hour that brings release,
and the city's crowded clangor
cries aloud for sin to cease;
and the homesteads and the woodlands
plead in silence for their peace.

3 Crown, O God, thine own endeavor;
cleave our darkness with thy sword;
feed all those who do not know thee
with the richness of thy word;
cleanse the body of this nation
through the glory of the Lord.

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus said, "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."
Matthew 25:1-13

Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon The Rev'd Whitney F. Altopp, D.Min.

A moment for reflection follows the sermon.

All stand for **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. 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.

The Prayers of the People

O God, who is our hope,
People **hear our prayer.**

All kneel for **The Confession of Sin**

Celebrant Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.
People **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.

Celebrant 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

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

Offertory Sentence

Celebrant Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good thy vows unto the Most High.
Psalm 50:14

Offertory Anthem Felix Mendelssohn

Sleepers, wake! a voice is calling,
It is the watchman on the walls:
Thou City of Jerusalem!
For lo! the Bridegroom comes!
Arise, and take your lamps!
Hallelujah!
Awake! His kingdom is at hand!
Go forth, go forth to meet your Lord.

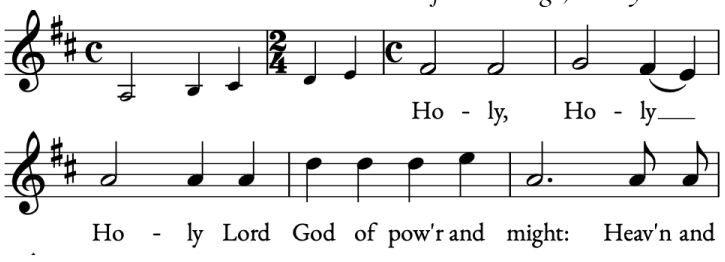
All stand for the **Presentation Hymn** *Old Hundredth*

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him, all creatures here below,
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving *Book of Common Prayer p. 367*

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you**.
Celebrant Lift up your hearts.
People **We lift them to the Lord.**
Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**
It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. *The Celebrant prays a Proper Preface.* Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus *Mass of St. George, Barry Smith*





All stand or kneel as the Celebrant continues and ends with

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

All **We remember his death,**
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues and ends with

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

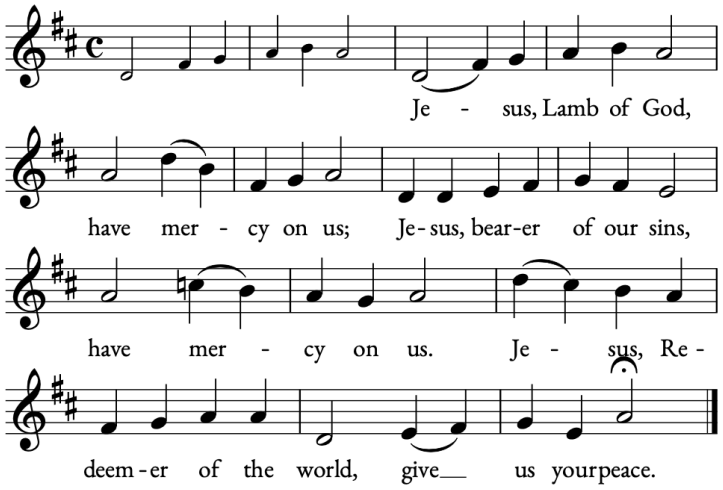
People **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant Alleluia: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People **Therefore let us keep the feast: Alleluia.**

Fraction Anthem *Mass of St. George, Barry Smith*



Celebrant The Gifts of God for the people of God.

All join in singing **Communion Hymn 573** *Langham*

1 Father eternal, Ruler of creation,
Spirit of life which moved e'er form was made,
through the thick darkness covering every nation,
light to our blindness, O be thou our aid:
Thy kingdom come, O Lord, thy will be done!

2 Races and peoples, lo, we stand divided,
and, sharing not our griefs, no joy can share;
by wars and tumults, love is mocked, derided;
his saving cross no nation yet will bear:
Thy kingdom come, O Lord, thy will be done!

3 Envious of heart, blind-eyed, with tongues confounded,
nation by nation still goes unforgiven,
in wrath and fear, by jealousies surrounded,
building proud towers which shall not reach to heaven:
Thy kingdom come, O Lord, thy will be done!

4 Lust of possession worketh desolations; there is no
meekness in the powers of earth;
led by no star, the rulers of the nations
still fail to bring us to the blissful birth:
Thy kingdom come, O Lord, thy will be done!

5 How shall we love thee, holy hidden Being,
if we love not the world which thou hast made?
Bind us in thine own love for better seeing
thy Word made flesh, and in a manger laid:
Thy kingdom come, O Lord, thy will be done!

All kneel for the **Prayer After Communion**

Celebrant Let us pray.

All **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.**

Blessing

The Priest pronounces God's blessing and all respond **Amen.**

All stand and sing **Hymn 68** *Llangloffan*

1 Rejoice! rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear!
The evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising, and soon he will draw nigh;
up, watch with expectation! at the midnight comes the cry.

2 See that your lamps are burning, replenish them with oil;
look now for your salvation, the end of sin and toil.
The marriage-feast is waiting, the gates wide open stand;
Rise up, ye heirs of glory, the Bridegroom is at hand!

3 Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
Arise, thou Sun so longed for, above this darkened sphere!
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption, and ever be with thee!

Dismissal

Response **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

Postlude

The flowers on the altar are given
to the glory of God and in memory of
Franklin Lischke
Martha Lischke

Music Notes

Our opening hymn, **When morning gilds the skies**, is an exuberant hymn of praise originating in nineteenth-century Germany, translated into English by Robert Bridges and sung to Joseph Barnby's tune LAUDES DOMINI. Its recurring acclamation, "May Jesus Christ be praised!" invites all of creation to join in worship, while its call for concord among nations anticipates today's prayers for justice, reconciliation, and the coming of God's kingdom.

Today's music reflects the tension between divine judgment and divine love, reminding us that true worship demands more than outward observance. Our sequence hymn, **Judge eternal, throned in splendor**, was written in 1902 by the Anglican theologian Henry Scott Holland. Its urgent plea for justice and healing echoes the prophet Amos, who condemns empty religious ritual and calls instead for righteousness to flow like an ever-running stream.

Sleepers, wake!, from Felix Mendelssohn's 1836 oratorio Paulus (St. Paul), draws on Philipp Nicolai's celebrated 1599 chorale Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme. Inspired directly by today's Gospel parable of the ten bridesmaids, the music calls the faithful to awaken and prepare for the arrival of the bridegroom. Mendelssohn also incorporates the chorale melody into the oratorio's overture, linking the call to spiritual vigilance with the story of Paul's conversion and awakening to faith.

Our Communion hymn, **Father eternal, Ruler of creation**, was written by Laurence Housman in 1919, in the aftermath of the First World War. Sung to Geoffrey Shaw's tune LANGHAM, it laments the divisions, violence, and greed of humanity while repeatedly praying, "Thy kingdom come, O Lord, thy will be done." Its final stanza asks how we can claim to love God without loving the world God has made.

We conclude with **Rejoice! rejoice, believers**, a German hymn by Laurentius Laurenti, written around 1700 and sung to the Welsh melody LLANGLOFFAN. Drawing directly on today's Gospel parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids, it calls us to keep our lamps burning and remain ready for Christ's coming. Its closing prayer for the redemption of the earth joins the longing for God's justice with the Christian hope of a renewed creation.