

Use the following worship guide as we gather on Sunday morning via Zoom. Simply click here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2398495210>

**** Announcements are at the end of this order of worship. ****

The Service of Worship
First and St. Stephen's United Church of Christ
Baltimore, Maryland
Ascension Sunday - Year C

June 1, 2025

10:30 a.m.



Prelude

Nancy Flandermeyer Chronister,
Director of Music

Welcome

The Rev. Dr. Kelly M. Sisson, Pastor

Call to Worship

(congregation reads **bold print**)

We can stare up at the sky,
or be Jesus' followers here and now.
We can search for directions to glory,
or we can serve with hope and love.
We can wring our hands, worrying we are alone,
or we can discover the Beloved Community which is all around us.

Hymn for Worship NCH #398 *Shadow and Substance*

TWILIGHT

~ as you are able, please stand ~

Scripture Lesson

Ephesians 1:15-23

Taylor Ramage, Liturgist

Hymn for Community MV #121

We Are All One

Tom Rasely

(see insert)

~ as you are able, please stand ~

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Remember these known joys and concerns:

- Laura Weaver-Haas' mother
- Bryce – after a kidney transplant
- McKenzie Shaw – living with chronic pain
- Corrie Bates and her family
- Jen's friend, Andrew and his family
- Peace in our world, our country, our community

If you share a concern and wish for it to be printed on this list, please consult with the person/s whose names are involved, then let the pastor know in writing via email they give their consent.

Call to Reconciliation

Though we may tend to believe that hope has disappeared like smoke from a blown-out candle, still God is present in our lives. Listening to our words, knowing our hearts, blessing us with grace and mercy. Let us pray together as we tell God where we have missed the mark.

Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

Why do we spend so much time staring off into space, Ancient of Days, when you make it clear we are called to serve others around us? We admit we would prefer seats of power not towels and basins to clean up messes. We long for proof when

we should focus on your promises. We daydream of glory and so come to believe being humble is for pushovers.

Forgive us for how quickly we forget, God of grace. Jesus has not left us but filled us with all the things we need. Compassion for the hurting, justice for the vulnerable, a community for the lonely, love for the hated, hope for these moments of concern. May we continue to look for Jesus, not in the distance, but in those who are around us, with us, among us each day.

Silence is kept

Assurance of Grace

Remember this, friends — We have not been left alone; we are not on our own. Christ is the Risen Lord, still present in our lives and in our world.

This is indeed good news. We have been forgiven, lifted, and are sent out to share grace, hope, justice, and life with all people. Thanks be to God. Amen.

The Ascension Lesson

Acts 1:1-11

Taylor Ramage, Liturgist

The Anthem

Love Has Made Us One

Choir

words and music by Karen Crane
arranged by Douglas Nolan

The Message

Lessons from an Oyster

Rev. Sisson

Hymn for Communion

When Jesus Set His Table (see insert)

Amanda Udis-Kessler

~ as you are able, please stand ~

The Welcoming Table

*We believe that the invitation to this table comes not from any church or individual, but from Jesus. We therefore invite in Christ's name **all** who hear that invitation and wish to respond to come forward and share the bread and the cup. In the spirit of inclusion, the cup is non-alcoholic. There is a gluten-free option for the bread.*

Making an Offering

Please consider making an offering through on-line giving or mail your check to the church address. You can find information on our church web page: first-ststephens.org You may also place your offering in the offering plate in the back of the sanctuary. Or, you may use the QR Code in this bulletin. Thank you.

Dedicating our Offerings (congregation reads bold print)

Stir our apathy, our fears that we don't have enough, our worries that others will misuse what is given, so that our generosity may overflow into grace, life, justice, and hope for others. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Hymn for Sending NCH #524

This Joy I Have

THIS JOY

~ as you are able, please stand ~

Benediction

Postlude

+ + + + +

Worship Resources for today are adapted from:

Cover Art by Desiree Cox
Thom Shuman, PCUSA

Welcome! We are glad you are here. If you are visiting with us, please fill out a visitor's card from the back of one of the chairs and place it in the offering plate or hand it to the pastor after the service. Please join us for coffee after the service in the Gathering Room behind the sanctuary.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Drag Comedy Night with the Rogers Forge community will be at First and St. Stephen's on Friday, June 5th at 7p.m. This is a ticketed event, and all persons will need to purchase their \$15 ticket beforehand, or pay \$20 at the door. Plan to attend this Friday night, and be a welcoming presence to our neighbors.

Next Sunday is Pentecost – wear red! ... or other fire colors. Then stay for the **Church-wide Business Meeting** – next Sunday immediately after Coffee Hour we will go into business session. Please see one of the Consistory members if you have any questions about the motion that is coming from the Consistory that the church will be asked to vote on. Every person in attendance who is a member in good standing will have one vote. No one may vote on behalf of a family member who is not present. Since zoom access will be available, there is no need for absentee ballots.

ACTC is asking for any non-perishable food items. For June, please bring **mac and cheese boxes, pastas, and bottled water**. Place items in the red wagon in the foyer so they may be delivered weekly.

PRIDE Parade – We will be marching in the Baltimore PRIDE parade on Sat., June 14th. Details to follow. Please bring hard candies and beads to be able to throw to those on the sidelines.

Save your Bubble Wrap – If you receive packages at home that are wrapped in bubble wrap, please bring the bubble wrap to the box in the foyer and it will be repurposed by Zach Langdon-Kennedy, our artist-in-residence.

Coffee Hours - Today – Jen Langdon
June 8th – Carol Berman
June 15th - Nancy Chronister
June 22nd - Amanda Ajulu
June 29th - Stephanie and Becca Dimick

PRIDE Sunday – June 22 – We will be led in worship by the exhibiting artist, **Dr. Vincent Stringer**. A “Meet the Artist” Reception will follow from noon until 2p.m. If you can help with the reception, please see the pastor.

Church Office (410) 377-5224

WiFi Password: ONAcomma

Church Staff

Kelly M. Sisson **Pastor** fssuccpastor@gmail.com (540)230-6903
Nancy Chronister **Director of Music** nancyfc88@comcast.net (610)724-6096
Alex Vishio **Theologian at Large** avishio@mail.smu.edu
Zach Langdon-Kennedy **Artist in Residence** tinnatupaws@gmail.com
Mario Cardenas **Administrative and Financial Assistant** fss.church.ofc@gmail.com (410)377-5224
Renard Noble **Properties Caregiver** (410) 419-5199

Consistory for 2025

Amanda Ajulu – President amandamajulu@yahoo.com
Emily Perl – Vice President emilyperl78@gmail.com
Jen Langdon – Treasurer jenjele@gmail.com
Tim Wheat – Secretary - wtwwheat@gmail.com
Carol Berman - carolberman1302@gmail.com
Bill Ingram – william.ingram@gmail.com
Nancy Ciesla - nciesla62@gmail.com
Nancy Chronister – Member at Large nancyfc88@comcast.net
Kelly Sisson – Ex-Officio - fssuccpastor@gmail.com