

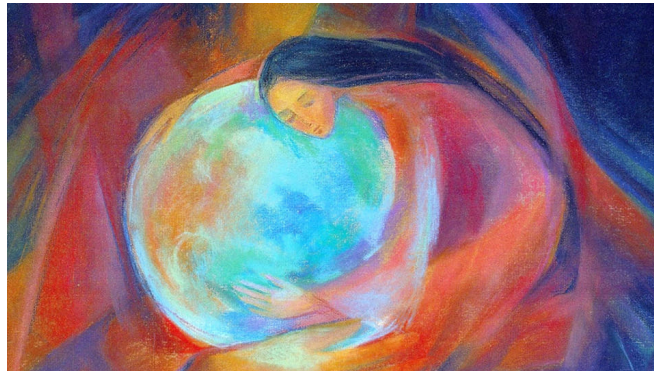
Use the following worship guide as we gather on Sunday morning via Zoom. Simply click here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2398495210>

**** 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
Fifth Sunday in Eastertide - Year C

May 18, 2025

10:30 a.m.



Prelude

Built on a Rock

Nancy Flandermeyer Chronister, Director of Music

by Edward Broughton

Welcome

The Rev. Dr. Kelly M. Sisson, Pastor

Lesson from the Gospels

John 13:31-35

Miriam Hedden, Liturgist

Call to Worship

(congregation reads **bold print**)

Praise God, all people!

Praise the Lord, all creation!

Whales doing backflips in the air, squid and octopi dancing on the ocean floor;
giant redwoods stretching to the sky, tomato vines cuddling around a stake.

Mountains blocking the sunrise, moles tunneling through our front lawns;
5-year-olds sitting in a story-time circle, grandparents singing 'their song.'

Redbuds decorating our backyard, grass growing faster than our children;
seals getting a suntan on the rocks, teenagers knotted together at church.

Praise the Lord, all creation!

Praise God, all people!

Hymn for Worship NCH #4

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

HYMN TO JOY

~ as you are able, please stand ~

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Remember these known joys and concerns:

- 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

It is no longer a new commandment; we have known it all our lives. Yet we find it so hard to love – ourselves, others, sometimes even God. But God loves us enough to forgive us for all our faults and foolishness. Join me as we tell of how we have hurt God, others, and even ourselves.

Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

Gardener of holiness and hope, you shower us with abundant blessings, yet we are reluctant to share from the bounty. You seek to plant justice in our hearts, but we often pluck it out before it can take root. Your wish is that we might leave grace at the edges for all who are broken or hungry or lonely, but we tend to harvest it all for ourselves.

When we fail to love others as ourselves, forgive us, God of our lives. When we trip our neighbors with our judgments, forgive us, God of the forgotten. When we utter hurtful words instead of kind ones, forgive us, God of healing. When we lose our way, continue to point us to Jesus, our Brother, who will walk with us to lead us to serve others, we pray.

Silence is kept

Assurance of Grace

If God based grace on what we deserve, our lives would be empty. But God's grace flows into us like rain on drought-baked soil, to nurture the seeds of life, of hope, of love within us.

What marvelous, good news! We are forgiven, we are healed, we are loved. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Hymn for Communion NCH #575 *O for a World* AZMON

~ as you are able, please stand ~

Lesson from the Scriptures *Revelation 21:1-6* Miriam Hedden, Liturgist

The Anthem *Beautiful Savior* Choir

arranged by Anna Laura Page

Miriam Hedden, flute

The Message *Something Old, Something New* Rev. Sisson

Hymn for a New Thing *Sing A New World Into Being* (see insert) NETTLETON

Words by Mary Louise Bringle

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)

You bless us in so many ways and with so many gifts, Loving God. As we praise you, may we offer our gifts so those who have so little may be fed, clothed, healed, restored, and graced. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Hymn for Sending NCH #526 *We Are Marching in the Light of God* SIYAHAMBA

~ as you are able, please stand ~

Benediction

Postlude

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Worship Resources for today are adapted from:
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

TODAY – After the service, we will have a listening session to hear reports and discuss the future of our church. This is in preparation for the **Spring Business Meeting on June 8th**.

Zoom Help Needed – Can you help with our Zoom ministry? We need some volunteers to be trained to help with our on-line presence on Sunday mornings when Sharon and Mike are not available. If you would like to make a difference in this way, please see Sharon Barr or Mike Chronister.

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.

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

Changing the Cycles – please bring **sanitary products** to help those in menstrual poverty. Please bring items to the box in the foyer and help young women remain in school during their cycles.

Coffee Hours - May 18th – Carol Berman
May 25th – Debbie Kavanagh
June 1st – Jen Langdon
June 8th – Carol Berman

Church Office (410) 377-5224

WiFi Password: ONAcomma

Church Staff

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