

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Chester, Vermont

Wednesday , July 29, 2026

Commemorating

Ordination of the Philadelphia Eleven

Presider Blessed be the one, holy, and living God!

People *Glory to God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Presider Let us pray.

Presider and people

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.

Presider God be with you.

People And also with you.

Presider Let us pray.

The Collect for the Ordination of the Philadelphia Eleven.

O God of Persistent Grace, you called the Philadelphia Eleven to the priesthood and granted them courage and boldness to respond, thereby opening the eyes of your church to the giftedness and equality of all: grant us so to hear, trust, and follow your Holy Spirit wherever she may lead, that the gifts of all your people may flourish throughout the earth, through Christ our Savior. Amen

First Reading Exodus 1:15-21

Reader A reading from Exodus

15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 16 When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live. 17 But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. 18 So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?" 19 The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." 20 So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.

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

People Thanks be to God.

Sirarch 1:14-15 recite in unison in place of the Psalm

¹⁴To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
she is created with the faithful in the womb.

¹⁵She made among human beings an eternal foundation,
and among their descendants she will abide faithfully.

Second Reading: Galatians 3:23-29

Reader A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Galatians.

23 Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. 27 As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

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

People Thanks be to God.

Commemoration of the Ordination of the Philadelphia Eleven

This commemoration celebrates The Philadelphia Eleven -- the first eleven women ordained to the priesthood in The Episcopal Church on July 29, 1974 at the Church Advocate in Philadelphia. Through most of the history of the Christian Church, women were relegated to positions secondary to those held by men and excluded from leadership roles. During the first half of the twentieth century that began to shift as the Episcopal Church experienced an expansion of the participation of women in the church as "Deaconesses" —a separate order from male Deacons. Deaconesses were set apart to care for "the sick, the afflicted, and the poor," but precluded from functioning liturgically. In 1970, laywomen were seated for the first time in General Convention as Deputies with voice and vote. Calling for a vote to eliminate the canonical distinctions between male deacons and female deaconesses, their intent was to make clear that women seeking ordination should be recognized as full and equal deacons. Once that motion was adopted, The Episcopal Church was presented with the issue of whether to ordain women as priests and bishops, too. A resolution was put forward by the women

deputies at the 1970 General Convention to approve women's ordination to the priesthood and episcopate. It failed to pass the House of Deputies, but nonetheless had much positive support. A similar resolution narrowly failed to pass at the next General Convention in 1973. By July 1974, supporters of women's ordination to the priesthood grew restless with the stalled legislative process and an ordination service was scheduled to ordain women to the priesthood by three retired bishops: Daniel Corrigan, retired bishop suffragan of Colorado; Robert L. DeWitt, recently resigned Bishop of Pennsylvania; and Edward R. Welles, retired Bishop of West Missouri. Eleven women who were deacons presented themselves as ready for ordination to the priesthood, and plans for the service proceeded. These women, who came to be called the "The Philadelphia Eleven", were Merrill Bittner, Alla Bozarth-Campbell, Alison Cheek, Emily Hewitt, Carter Heyward, Suzanne Hiatt, Marie Moorefield, Jeannette Piccard, Betty Schiess, Katrina Swanson, and Nancy Wittig. They were ordained on July 29, 1974 at the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The ordinations inspired both celebration and controversy in the Episcopal Church. The House of Bishops declared them "irregular" and the Philadelphia Eleven were prohibited from officially exercising priestly functions. Nevertheless, the movement for the ordination of women continued to move forward. At the 65th General Convention in September 1976, the ordination of women to the priesthood was approved to begin on January 1, 1977, the previous "irregular" ordinations were regularized, and the way was opened for women to respond to the call to ordination in the Episcopal Church

The Holy Gospel Luke 24:1-11

Reader The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Luke.

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they went in, they did not find the body. 4 While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. 5 The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. 6 Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." 8 Then they remembered his words, 9 and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who

told this to the apostles. 11 But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

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

Reflections from all of us.

Prayers of the People

Friends, God our Savior is our refuge! So let us pray to God, saying, "Incline your ear to us; *hear our words.*"

God our Savior, show us your face. Satisfy your Church in your presence. Reveal to us your ways so that we might walk in the light of your truth.

Silence

Incline your ear to us;

Hear our words.

O God, your eyes are fixed on justice. We pray for all victims of war and violence and famine. Give heed to the cries of those in need throughout the world.

Silence

Incline your ear to us;

Hear our words.

God of insight and knowing, you opened our minds, hearts, and eyes to the gift of women called to serve as priests among us; we give you thanks for encouraging the Philadelphia Eleven to pursue ordination, and for giving them to persist in that pursuit. The Philadelphia Eleven", were Merrill Bittner, Alla Bozarth-Campbell, Alison Cheek, Emily Hewitt, Carter Heyward, Suzanne Hiatt, Marie Moorefield, Jeannette Piccard, Betty Schiess, Katrina Swanson, and Nancy Wittig. And thanks for giving the three ordaining bishops the courage and strength to make this gift possible.

Continue to give us courage to bless the ministries of the Eleven and of their successors in the ministry.

Incline your ear to us.

Hear our words.

God of abundance, you have blessed the earth to bring forth plenty. May we recognize the abundance in our own lives, so that those with little may also have their fill.

Silence

Incline your ear to us;

Hear our words.

O God, have compassion on the people of our region. Show us your marvelous loving-kindness so that trust in your goodness might replace our fears.

Silence

Incline your ear to us;

Hear our words.

God of blessing, we call upon you, for you answer us in our need. We pray this day for all those desperate for your blessing. Moved by compassion, heal the sick and suffering ones we hold in our hearts this day.

Invite the congregation to add their petitions and thanksgivings, followed by silence

Incline your ear to us;

Hear our words.

God our vindicator, justify the dead through the mercy of your Messiah. We pray that in the fullness of time, they may awake, beholding your likeness.

Silence

Incline your ear to us;

Hear our words.

From riteplanning.com.

Copyright © 2026 Church Publishing Inc. All rights reserved.

From riteplanning.com.

Copyright © 2026 church publishing inc. All rights reserved.

The Peace *Presider* The peace of Christ be always with you.

People And also with you.

During the preparation of the communion elements and vessels, we sing the Taize chant, "Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name; bless the Lord, my soul, he leads us into light."

Eucharistic Prayer *The people remain standing.*

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.

Presider All thanks and praise are yours at all times and in all places, our true and loving God; through Jesus Christ, your eternal Word, the Wisdom from on high by whom you created all things. You laid the foundations of the world and enclosed the sea when it burst out from the womb; You brought forth all creatures of the earth and gave breath to humankind. Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing, all you create is a sign of hope for our journey; through the great shepherd of your flock, Jesus Christ our Savior; who after his resurrection sent forth his apostles to preach the Gospel and to teach all nations; and promised to be with them always, even to the end of the ages. And so as the stars sing your praises we join the heavenly beings and all creation as we shout with joy:

Presider and people S-125 Service Music, The Hymnal 1982

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The people stand or kneel.

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all, your Word has never been silent;

you called a people to yourself, as a light to the nations, you delivered them from bondage and led them to a land of promise.

Of your grace, you gave Jesus to be human, to share our life, to proclaim the coming of your holy reign and give himself for us, a fragrant offering.

Through Jesus Christ our Redeemer,

you have freed us from sin,

brought us into your life,

reconciled us to you,

and restored us to the glory you intend for us.

We thank you that on the night before he died for us Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, gave it to his friends and said: "Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper Jesus took the cup of wine, said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said:

"Drink this, all of you:

this cup is the new Covenant in my Blood,

poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me."

And so, remembering all that was done for us:

the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and ascension,

longing for Christ's coming in glory,

and presenting to you these gifts

your earth has formed and human hands have made,

we acclaim you, O Christ:

Presider and people

Dying, you destroyed our death.

Rising, you restored our life.

Christ Jesus, come in glory!

Send your Holy Spirit upon us

and upon these gifts of bread and wine

that they may be to us the Body and Blood of your Christ.

Grant that we, burning with your Spirit's power,

may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ, and in the fullness of time gather us with blessed Luke, the patron of this congregation, the blessed eleven women who accepted the call to ordination., and all your saints into the joy of your everlasting kingdom.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ,
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
we worship you our God and Creator
in voices of unending praise.

Blessed are you now and for ever. AMEN.

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

Presider Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People Therefore let us keep the feast.

The Communion All are invited to receive communion. *The communion wine contains alcohol. It is perfectly acceptable to consume only the bread.*

Postcommunion Prayer

Presider and People Loving God, we give you thanks for restoring us in your image and nourishing us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. Now send us forth a people, forgiven, healed, renewed; that we may proclaim your love to the world and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.

Hymn 707 The Hymnal 19892



1 Take my life, and let it be con - se - crat - ed, Lord, to thee;
2 Take my voice, and let me sing al - ways, on - ly, for my King;

take my mo - ments and my days, let them flow in cease - less praise.
take my in - tel - lect, and use ev - ery power as thou shalt choose.

Take my hands, and let them move at the im-pulse of thy love;
Take my will, and make it thine; it shall be no long - er mine.

take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be thy roy - al throne.
Take my - self, and I will be ev - er, on - ly, all for thee.

Presider May the Spirit of truth lead you into all truth, giving you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and to proclaim the wonderful works of God; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

Leader Go in peace to love and serve our God.

People Thanks be to God.

