

# A Service of Celebration and Affirmation



Saint Thomas' Parish  
Washington

June 8, 2008  
6:30 p.m.



# Gathering Rite

**Prelude**

*Psalm 118 From: Der Fluyten Lust-hof*

*Jacob van Eyck*  
(Bruce Calvin, recorder)

**Procession**

**Welcome**

Dear people of God: We have come together to witness and affirm the covenant of love and fidelity which these couples have made with each other. God made our first parents for each other, and when they had fallen into sin, God created a new household by grace in Abraham and Sarah, through which all people might be blessed. In the fullness of time, our Lord Jesus Christ, fruit of that household, gathered the Apostles together with himself to create a new family of God. Behold now the mystery of the union between these persons, called by God to embody in their covenant that union between Christ and Christ's Church.

The union of two people in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and that their love may be a source of grace and blessing to all whom they encounter.

## The Word of God

**Presider** The Lord be with you.

*People* And also with you.

**Presider** Let us pray,

O gracious and everliving God: you have taught us to love one another as Christ loved us. Look with favor on these couples who come to you seeking your blessing, and assist them with your grace, that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep the promises and vows they have made. Protect them from all trouble and danger and bring them with us to the heavenly feast of your eternal kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. *Amen.*

**First Reading**

Isaiah 43: 16-21

## Psalm 67

1

May God be merciful to us and bless us, \*  
show us the light of his countenance and come to us.

2

Let your ways be known upon earth, \*  
your saving health among all nations.

3

Let the peoples praise you, O God; \*  
let all the peoples praise you.

4

Let the nations be glad and sing for / joy, \*  
for you judge the peoples with equity  
and guide all the nations upon / earth.

5

Let the peoples praise you, O / God; \*  
let all the peoples / praise you.

6

The earth has brought forth her / increase; \*  
may God, our own God, give us his / blessing.

**Second Reading**

Ephesians 3: 14-19

**Gospel**

John 15: 9-12

**Homily**

The Rev. Frank Dunn

## Renewal and Honoring of Committed Relationships

### THE COVENANT

*The presider invites the couple to stand in the full view of the gathered community and addresses the couples in these or similar words.*

A covenant is an ancient form of promise, a public declaration of commitment that binds people in an enduring relationship. The Bible tells the story of God's covenant with human beings. God's covenant with Israel was the basis of the people's liberation from slavery and exile. God's covenant with the followers of Jesus brings us into a new community where there is no male nor female, Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, but one people united in Christ. All our covenants with family and friends are signs of God's faithfulness and love. They are living expressions of God's promises to us and sources of hope to others. Today we gather to witness and to affirm the public commitment of these couples to such a covenant.

*The presider then addresses the couple as follows.*

*Presider:* Will you continue to live together in love?

***Couple:*** We will, with God's help.

*Presider:* Will you continue to be faithful to one another?

***Couple:*** We will, with God's help.

*Presider:* Will you continue to support one another in love so that you may both grow into maturity of faith?

***Couple:*** We will, with God's help.

*Presider:* Will you do all in your power to make your life together a witness to the love of God in the world?

***Couple:*** We will, with God's help.

*The presider invites the couple to stand in full view of the congregation and to face each other. Taking each other by the hand(s), each says to the other in turn.*

N., I give myself to you. I love you, trust you, and delight in you. I will share your burdens and your joys. I will go with you wherever God calls us. This is my solemn promise.

*The presider then addresses the community as follows.*

Will you, friends and family members, continue to support these couples in the promises they have made?

**We will.**

Will you continue to celebrate the goodness of God's grace evident in their lives?

**We will.**

Will you continue to stand by them, encourage, guide, and pray for them in times of trouble and distress?

**We will.**

## **The Prayers**

*Leader :* Let us pray for these couples reaffirming their commitment, and for all God's people, saying, "Gracious God, hear our prayer."

I ask your prayers for these couples, that they may be filled with God's blessing and grow in love and faithfulness throughout their life together. Gracious God...

***Hear our prayer***

May they have the courage and grace, when they hurt each other, to acknowledge and forgive each other's faults. May their lives together be a sign of God's mercy. Gracious God...

*Hear our prayer*

I ask your prayers for the planet. May we have the wisdom and will to honor and protect this fragile earth and all its creatures. Gracious God...

*Hear our prayer*

I ask your prayers for our nation and the world. May justice and wisdom, peace and respect flourish among men and women everywhere. Gracious God...

*Hear our prayer*

I ask your prayers for this community here gathered, and for the welfare of all people. Gracious God...

*Hear our prayer*

I ask your prayers for those who suffer any need or trouble. We pray for the sick and the poor, the unemployed, the imprisoned, the lonely and the bereaved, those who suffer from addictions, those who perpetrate hatred and intolerance and for their victims. We pray for our soldiers at home and abroad, and for all those who live with violence. Gracious God...

*Hear our prayer*

I ask your prayers for people of faith throughout the world. May we be the living presence of love and life in the world. Gracious God...

*Hear our prayer*

I ask your prayers of gratitude for all those who have gone before us in our struggles. Gracious God...

*Hear our prayer*

*Presider*

O Holy One, you made us in your image and bestowed upon us life and blessing. You command your followers to be united by the new commandment of love. Grant that all of us here gathered may find our lives strengthened and our loyalties confirmed. Grant that the bonds of our common humanity may be so transformed by your grace, that your will be done on heaven as it is on earth. All this we pray in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Final Blessing

Dismissal

Postlude:

*Doen Daphne III From: Der Fluten Lust-hof*

*Jacob van Eyck*  
(Bruce Calvin, recorder)

Following the Postlude, the congregation is invited to a reception in the Guild Room.



### Guest Clergy

The Rev. Frank Dunn, Senior Priest,  
St. Stephen and the Incarnation Episcopal Church  
Washington, DC

Our homilist today is the Rev. Frank Dunn, the senior Priest of St. Stephen's and the Incarnation.

Frank's ministry in the last decade has included an increasing emphasis on issues of spiritual development and social justice for sexual minorities in the Church, as well as a deepening concentration on men's spiritual issues. With a love of preaching and story-telling, he sees his whole ministry as a matter of helping people make connections between their faith and their everyday lives, especially as they seek God in the midst of changes and transitions they experience.



**Welcome to St. Thomas' Parish**, an historic Episcopal congregation in the heart of Dupont Circle. We are glad that you found us and that you are here. **St. Thomas' is a community of Christians on a spiritual journey.** Our worship provides a pathway towards a deeper understanding of the risen and transforming Christ. Through joyful singing, engaging preaching, prayer and silence, we come together to share in **one bread, one body.**

As a **progressive, welcoming and inclusive** congregation, we seek both to know Christ and to make Christ known to **people from all walks of life.**

St. Thomas' is a place to **find and be found by God.** Wherever you may be along your own faith journey, **there is always room at the table for you.**

*-The People of St. Thomas'*



#### Vestry

*John Carter, Senior Warden; Barbara Hays, Junior Warden  
Michael Bell, Dan Costello, Tim Elig, Camille Blake Fall, Mary Hager, Dennis Hobb,  
Brad Latham, Mike Mattmiller, Kristin Queen Shaffer*

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Ms. Nicole Garner, Bookkeeper Ms. Evelyn McMillan, Coffee Steward Mr. Esteban Mares, Sexton Ms. Cindy Pettigrew, Parish Executive Secretary Mr. Timothy Hagy, Music Director  The Rev. John F. Dwyer, Assistant Rector The Rev. Dr. Nancy Lee Jose, Rector  The Right Reverend John Bryson Chane Bishop of Washington	  nicole@garnergore.com evelyn.mcmillan@earthlink.net maresbravo@aol.com info@stthomasdc.org timhagy@comcast.net or musician@stthomasdc.org jdwyer@stthomasdc.org rector@stthomasdc.org  jchane@edow.org