

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



September 27, 2026

10 a.m.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com, Email <http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com>

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

Katharine Gossman, Music Director

Rita Ford, Office Manager

All Members, Ministers

Welcome, Everyone!

We are glad to have you with us this morning. If you need assistance in finding anything, one of our ushers will be glad to help you.

Restrooms are found in the fellowship hall and office building to the right as you exit the sanctuary. Proceed up the stairs and through the glass door. Unisex bathrooms are available through the kitchen in the office area.

“Let the Little Children Come” Matthew 19:14 - In accordance with St. Stephen’s mission “to be a welcoming community . . .” we encourage all ages to worship on Sundays. We also believe that children learn to welcome others by how they have been welcomed. If you are a parent of a young child, know that this community supports your efforts to engage your child in worship and understands that it can be a stressful process. Having children in worship is a joy that we treasure, so please know that we welcome you and your children as they learn to become active members in Christ’s body.

Please remember to turn off your cell phone during the liturgy.

All the hymns for the worship service are in the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship book and numbered by hymn, not page.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church (ELCA) is a Reconciling in Christ congregation that explicitly welcomes people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. St. Stephen is equally committed to anti-racism. We welcome people without regard to race, ethnicity, age, family status, economic status, or differing abilities.

All are invited to receive the sacrament. Lutherans believe that Jesus Christ is present in, with and under the consecrated bread and wine of Holy Communion. Those not wishing to commune are welcome to the altar to receive a blessing. To indicate this, please cross your arms over your chest. If you are not able to come forward, please inform the ushers and the meal will be brought to you.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

PRELUDE

The assembly stands.



+ GATHERING +

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

C Amen.

P Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Silence for reflection.

P Compassionate God,

C we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

P Hear this good news: We have peace with God through ✠ Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

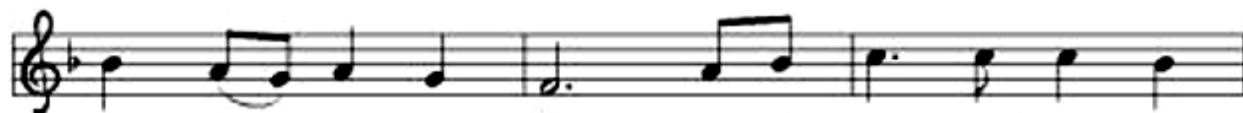
C Amen.



1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly
 2 Let us build a house where proph-ets speak, and words are strong and
 3 Let us build a house where love is found in wa - ter, wine and
 4 Let us build a house where hands will reach be - yond the wood and
 5 Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and vi - sions



live, a place where saints and chil - dren tell how
 true, where all God's chil - dren dare to seek to
 wheat: a ban - quet hall on ho - ly ground where
 stone to heal and strength - en, serve and teach, and
 heard and loved and trea - sured, taught and claimed as



hearts learn to for - give. Built of hopes and dreams and
 dream God's reign a - new. Here the cross shall stand as
 peace and jus - tice meet. Here the love of God, through
 live the Word they've known. Here the out - cast and the
 words with - in the Word. Built of tears and cries and



vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of
 wit - ness and as sym - bol of God's grace; here as one we
 Je - sus, is re - vealed in time and space; as we share in
 strang-er bear the im - age of God's face; let us bring an
 laugh-ter, prayers of faith and songs of grace, let this house pro -



Christ shall end di - vi - sions;
 claim the faith of Je - sus;
 Christ the feast that frees us: All are wel - come,
 end to fear and dan - ger;
 claim from floor to raf - ter:



all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen

Text and music © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc. 7501 N. Marine Ave. Chicago, IL 60630. www.gia.com. 800.447.5598

GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb

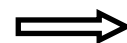
who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich-es, wis - dom, and

strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.



Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,


al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of


God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon-or,


glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for-ev - er. A - men.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,


al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was


slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

Final refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.


Al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY



P Let us pray.

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.



CHILDREN'S TIME

Noisy Offering

+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

¹The word of the Lord came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? ³As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die.

²⁵Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

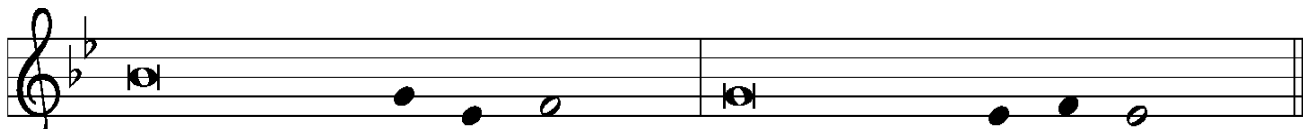
³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-9

We sing the psalm responsively.



Leader ¹To | you, O Lord,
I lift | up my soul.

C ²**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be | put to shame,**
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.

L ³Let none who look to you be | put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame | who are treacherous.

C ⁴**Show me your | ways, O Lord,**
and teach | me your paths.

L ⁵Lead me in your | truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all | the day long.

C ⁶**Remember, O Lord, your compas- | sion and love,**
for they are from | everlasting.

L ⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your good- | ness,
O Lord.

C ⁸**You are gracious and up- | right, O Lord;**
therefore you teach sinners | in your way.

L ⁹You lead the low- | ly in justice
and teach the low- | ly your way.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

Amen.

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

¹ If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, ¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

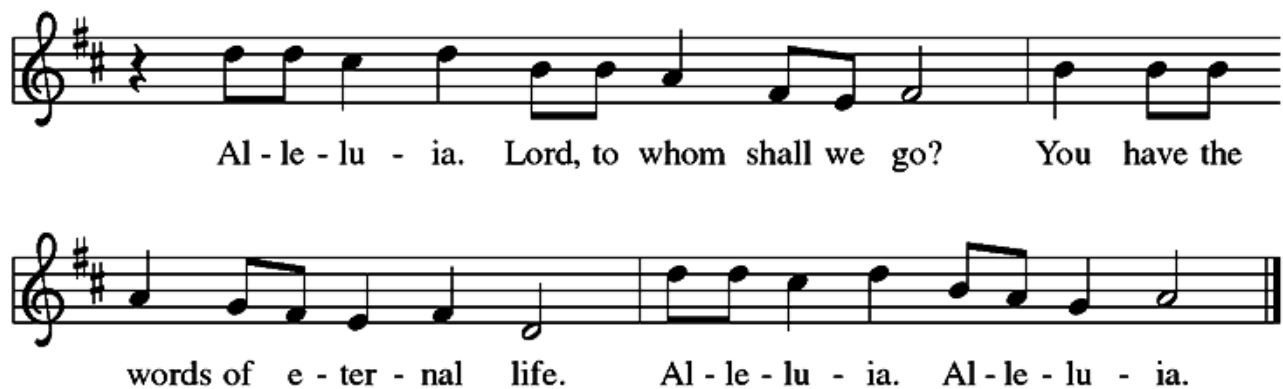
¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

R The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Matthew 21:23-32

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

P The holy gospel according to Matthew, the twenty first chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

²³ When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go.

³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.

³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

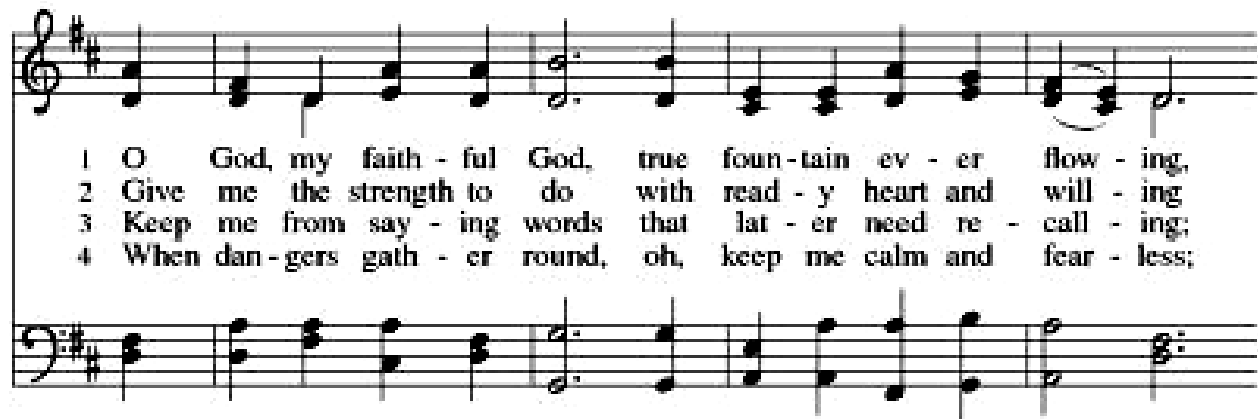
C Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

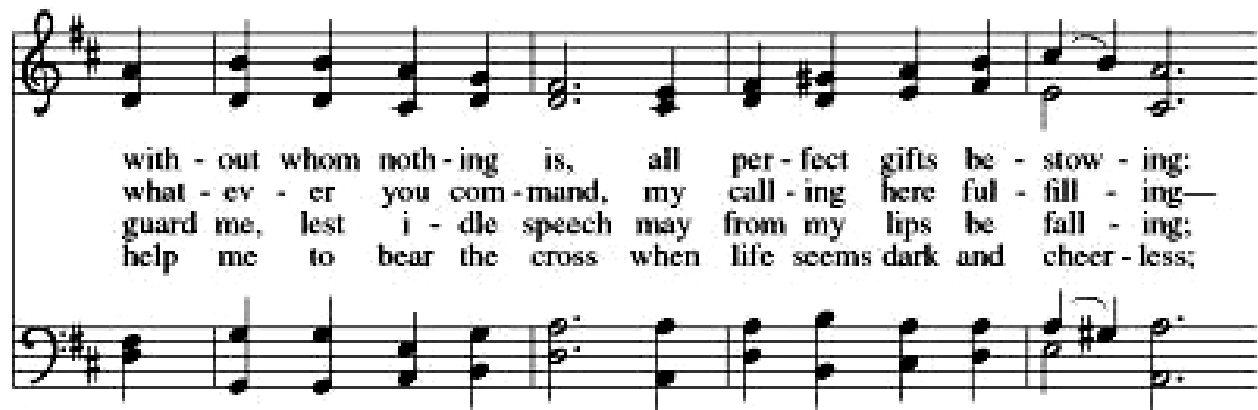
SERMON *We encounter the living word of God in the preaching.*

Quiet reflection.

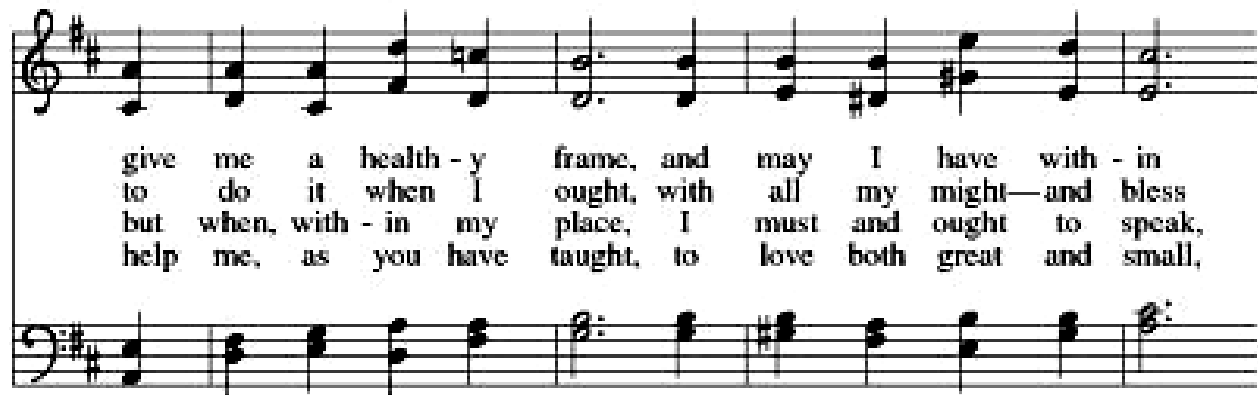
The assembly stands.



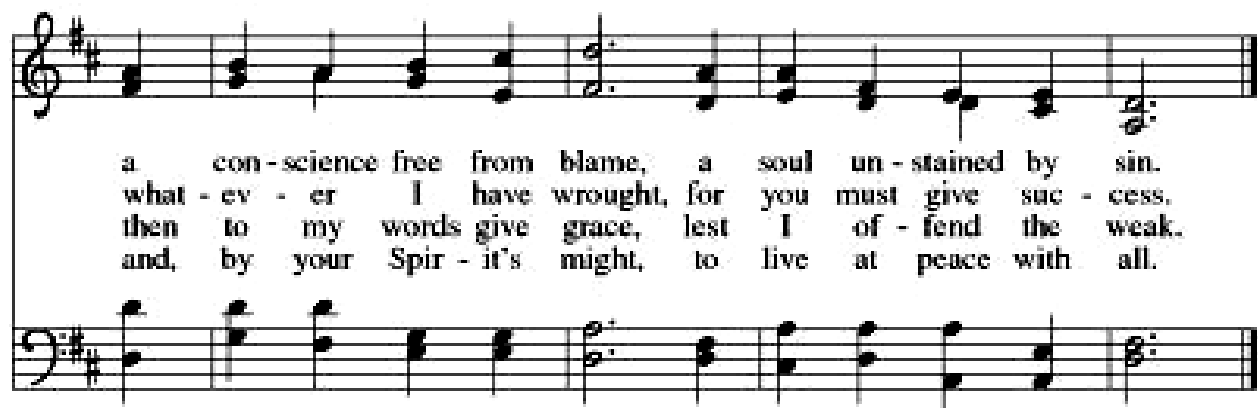
1 O God, my faith - ful God, true foun - tain ev - er flow - ing,
 2 Give me the strength to do with read - y heart and will - ing
 3 Keep me from say - ing words that lat - er need re - call - ing;
 4 When dan - gers gath - er round, oh, keep me calm and fear - less;



with - out whom noth - ing is, all per - fect gifts be - stow - ing;
 what - ev - er you com - mand, my call - ing here ful - fill - ing—
 guard me, lest i - dle speech may from my lips be fall - ing;
 help me to bear the cross when life seems dark and cheer - less;



give me a health - y frame, and may I have with - in
 to do it when I ought, with all my might—and bless
 but when, with - in my place, I must and ought to speak,
 help me, as you have taught, to love both great and small,



a con - science free from blame, a soul un - stained by sin.
 what - ev - er I have wrought, for you must give suc - cess.
 then to my words give grace, lest I of - fend the weak,
 and, by your Spir - it's might, to live at peace with all.

APOSTLES' CREED

A Let us confess our faith.

C I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer prayers, confident that God hears us.

(A brief silence)

Center us, O God, on humility as we strive to follow your way. Where the church is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; if amiss, then reform; where it is right, strengthen it. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Teach us, O Lord on stewardship as we follow your way. Open our eyes to care for the gifts of your creation and the bountiful vineyard of your world. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For peace and reconciliation among the nations, especially Iran, Gaza, Yemen, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine, and Myanmar. We pray for the Haitian immigrant community and for the extension of Temporary Protection Status. Hear our prayers for just elections and political transitions in the US and around the world. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For families impacted by gun violence. Those killed in a bus collision and helicopter accident in Los Angeles. And for compassion and safety for all immigrants. St. Stephen, who else would welcome our prayers today?

(Pause for people to speak petitions.)

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For St. Stephen and all who seek solace and direction from our Savior Jesus Christ. We give you thanks for our Worship and Music committee and all who share music and words of peace with others. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

A few at a time, each week, we pray for people within the St. Stephen worship community. We pray today for Lawana and Sandy Lamb-Daniels, Greta Langley and Chris Gossman and for their extended families. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your steadfast love holds all the saints who have finished their work and are at rest. As we grieve, remind us of your mercy so we may also give thanks. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Grant the prayers we have offered, the ones we have forgotten to ask, and for whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

AMEN!

The peace of Christ be with you, always!

And also with you!

Let us share the peace of God with one another.



+ MEAL +

Stephen Saint
@Stephen-Saint



venmo

Use this QR Code
to connect to
Venmo for a dona-
tion to St.
Stephen. Code
5469.

OFFERING

An offering is presented for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

ANTHEM *"Called to Share God's Love" - Organ*

God has called us with love and mercy.
We are precious in God's sight, a holy people.

Proclaim the mighty acts of God.
Proclaim the acts of God who calls us into marvelous light!

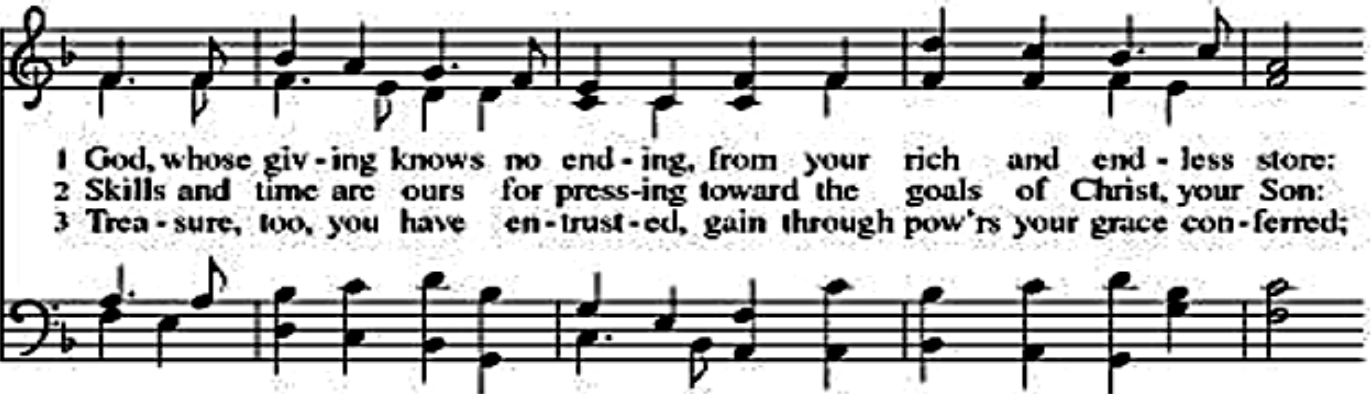
God has called us with love and mercy.
We are precious in God's sight, a holy people.

We are called to share God's love.
We are called to share God's mercy,
For all are precious in God's own sight.

Oh, holy people, we are called.
We are called to share God's love.

OFFERING HYMN ELW 678 *God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending (vs.1-2)*

The assembly stands to sing the offering hymn as the collection and the gifts are brought forward.



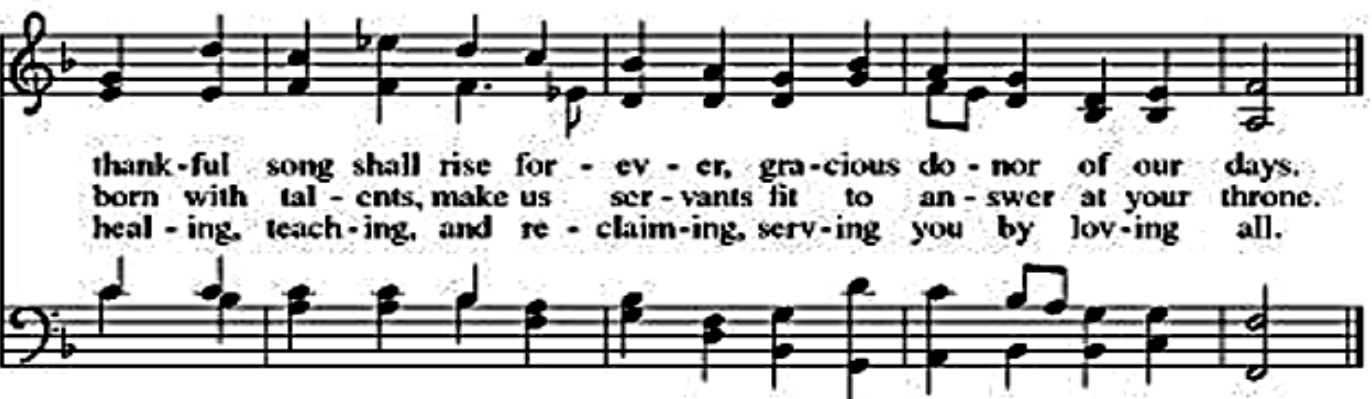
1 God, whose giv - ing knows no end - ing, from your rich and end - less store:
2 Skills and time are ours for press - ing toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
3 Trea - sure, too, you have en - trust - ed, gain through pow'rs your grace con - ferred;



na - ture's won - der, Je - sus' wis - dom, cost - ly cross, grave's shat - tered door,
all at peace in health and free - dom, rac - es joined, the church made one.
ours to use for home and kin - dred, and to spread the gos - pel word.



gift - ed by you, we turn to you, of - f'ring up our - selves in praise;
Now di - rect our dai - ly la - bor, lest we strive for self a - lone;
O - pen wide our hands in shar - ing, as we heed Christ's age - less call,



thank - ful song shall rise for - ev - er, gra - cious do - nor of our days,
born with tal - ents, make us ser - vants fit to an - swer at your throne.
heal - ing, teach - ing, and re - claim - ing, serv - ing you by lov - ing all.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The lyrics are: 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.'

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

The presiding minister continues to give thanks.

P In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread,
and gave thanks; broke it,
and gave it to his disciples,
saying: Take and eat;
this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

C **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.

C **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

The assembly is seated.

LAMB OF GOD



DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

As the ushers direct you, come to the altar using the side aisles and return to your seat via the central aisle. The assisting ministers offer both wine (first) and grape juice (second) from pouring cups. Take a communion glass from one of the trays at the corners as you approach the rail. Leave the empty glass on the lower rail. Wheat-free wafers are available, simply tell the pastor.

COMMUNION HYMNS

ELW 523 *Let Us Go Now to the Banquet*

ELW 789 *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us*

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly stands.

+ SENDING +

BLESSING *We receive the blessings of the triune God.*

P The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus.

C Amen.

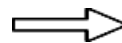
The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit.

C Amen.

The God of grace ✝ bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

SENDING HYMN **ELW 660** *Lift High the Cross*



DISMISSAL

A We believe out loud that God's mission for us is:

C **to be an active community that welcomes all people to nurture and share their faith and gifts with everyone, according to God's call.**

A Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

C **Thanks be to God!**

+ + +

SENDING HYMN ELW 660 *Lift High the Cross*

Refrain

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro - claim till

all the world a - dore his sa - cred name.

1 Come, Chris - tians, fol - low where our cap - tain trod,
 2 All new - born ser - vants of the Cru - ci - fied
 3 O Lord, once lift - ed on the glo - rious tree,
 4 So shall our song of tri - umph ev - er be:

Refrain

our king vic - to - rious, Christ, the Son of God,
 bear on their brows the seal of him who died,
 as thou hast prom - ised, draw us all to thee.
 praise to the Cru - ci - fied for vic - to - ry!

Text: George W. Kitchin, 1827–1912; rev. Michael R. Newbolt, 1874–1956

Music: CRUCIFER, Sydney H. Nicholson, 1875–1947

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Today's altar flowers are dedicated
to the Glory o God.

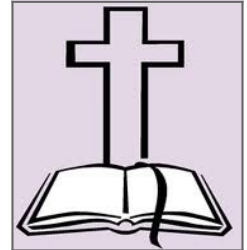
Next Sunday's Readings, Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost:

[Isaiah 5:1-7](#)

[Psalm 80:7-15](#)

[Philippians 3:4b-14](#)

[Matthew 21:33-46](#)



SERVING EVERY SUNDAY

Pastor Tom, presiding and preaching

Katharine Gossman, piano

Karl Barton, flute

Denise Bookwalter, announcements

Choir: Karl Barton, Melissa Barton, Mark Canning, Austin Cowan, Kirsten Ebbesen, Rita Ford, Alison Haney, Rudy Hehn, Susan Hehn, Colleen Holdcraft, Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Olivia James, Lawana Lamb-Daniels, Graham Reece, Jen Reece, Donna Schiffer, Simone Schuster, Sylvia Smith, Dave Suhrweir, Cassandra White.

SERVING TODAY AND ONE WEEK FROM TODAY

Serving	Sept. 27	October 4
Assisting Minister	Kirsten Ebbesen	Beth Alexander
Cup Minister	Rita Ford	Susan Warren
Cantor	Cassandra White	Karl Barton
Lector	Jennifer Slusarz	Ron Hartung
Acolyte		
Tech Team	Sandy Lamb-Daniels Loraine Sunberg	Cindy Suhrweir Colin Hackley
Ushers	Erik Robinson Bob Eshleman	Patrick Kennell Bob Eshleman
Altar Guild	Beth Alexander	Rita Ford Anita Sawh
Counters	Loraine Sundberg Marilyn Larson	Diane Hines Margaret Bowers

PRAYER REQUESTS

For the sick: Sallie Robinson (wife of Erik Robinson); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White); Laura McDuffie (sister of Rob Schiffer).

In treatment for cancer: Matthew Canning (son of Sue and Mark Canning); Kevin Vislocky (friend of Bob and Linda Eshleman); Scott Simmons (son of Sharon Simmons); Gordon Fleischer; Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; David McManus (friend of Audrey Post); Shannon Miller (friend of Barb ODonnell).

Health and protection: For Frank “Rame” Meyers, in long-term care. For those encountering fear & uncertainty around government cuts and the future of Medicaid. For immigrants and refugees who are working and raising families in the United States, that they may be safe and secure without unnecessary deportations.

For prisoners: All those on Death Row.

Other concerns: Joann Stomberg (friend of Margaret Bowers), after the death of her husband; Jayden Schiffer (grandson of Rob and Donna Schiffer), experiencing unresolved and serious digestive problems; Pr. Trixie Richter (friend of Cheryl), on the unexpected death of her husband, Adrian; St. Philip Lutheran Church, Mt. Dora, as they grieve their pastor’s loss; Cheryl Stuart and family, following the death of her friend Linda Bobbit; Charlie Cogswell, son of Judee Light, for continued healing; Haley Larsen (daughter of Rob Schiffer’s cousin), experiencing serious gastrointestinal problems; Sharon Simmons and family, following the death of her sister, Sue Berent; Kevin Robinson (son of Erik Robinson), in need of encouragement; Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Walt Steinvorth (friend of Rob Schiffer), suffering from pericarditis and vestibular neuritis and learning to cope with dizziness and severe equilibrium problems; Karen Elizabeth Olson.

Church concerns: St. Stephen Church Council; the Florida-Bahamas Synod Council; all congregations searching for ways to stay connected and proclaim the Good News; Reconciling Works; Bishops Pedro Suarez and Yehiel Curry; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA advocacy offices and ministry.

World concerns: For all people suffering and/or recovering from hurricanes; migrants and asylum seekers; civil rights for people around the world; a ceasefire in Ethiopia and in Ukraine; peace in Gaza and the Middle East.

Calendar for September 27 - October 4

Sept. 27	Sun.	9:00 am	Bible study
		9:30 am	Choir rehearsal
		10:00 am	Worship, Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
29	Wed.	6:00 pm	Confirmation for adults
		7:00 pm	Choir rehearsal
30	Thurs.	10:00 am	Bible study
Oct. 04	Sun.	9:00 am	Bible study
		9:30 am	Choir rehearsal
		10:00 am	Worship, Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FLOWER CHART FOR 2026: Do you have an anniversary, birthday or special memory you would like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service by signing up for the 2026 Flower Chart located in the narthex. The cost is \$40, and you can place it in the offering plate.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: Want to read a sermon you missed? Visit <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>. Want to read the latest newsletters? Go to <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>. Want to browse a collection of St. Stephen songs? They're at <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>

CHURCH COUNCIL	
President, Denise Bookwalter	
Treasurer, Jennifer Dritt	Buildings Coordinator, Sandy Lamb-Daniels
Worship & Music, Susan Hehn	Grounds Coordinator, Rob Schiffer
Care & Hospitality, Lawana Lamb-Daniels	Outreach, Sharon Simmons
Mutual Ministry, Sylvia Smith	Education & Discipleship, Emily Stover
Communications, Colleen Holdcraft	Youth, Graham Reece



Our Guiding Principles

1. Jesus is Lord of our lives.
2. We welcome absolutely everyone.
3. We enjoy a celebratory relationship with God through worship.
4. We support and encourage community both in and beyond our congregation.
5. We are called to use our God-given gifts of time, talent, and treasure to serve all of God's people and seek justice for them.
6. Creativity and new ideas are a vital part of our life together as a congregation.