

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Reconciling In Christ Sunday



January 31, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Reconciling In Christ Sunday

INTRODUCTION

ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation advocates for the full welcome, inclusion, and equity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Lutherans in all aspects of the life of their Church, congregations, and community. ReconcilingWorks offers resources for Reconciling In Christ Sunday, the last Sunday in January.

This Sunday is recognized ecumenically throughout the welcoming church movement. For faith communities that have made a public stand in welcoming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, this Sunday is set aside to highlight our shared ministry of hospitality and reconciliation.

CALL TO WORSHIP

PRELUDE





+ GATHERING +

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Pastor As a church, we believe all are welcome. Let us name the ways we have fallen short in justice-making for our LGBTQIA+ siblings, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, women-identified people, immigrants, elderly, and those who do not have access to basic human needs. And accept the challenges that stand before us.

To those who have been excluded by the church because of who they are and who they love,

Congregation we ask forgiveness and welcome you.

P To those who have systems created against them due to the color of their skin,

C we ask forgiveness and welcome you.

P To those who do not have equal access to thrive due to government systems,

C we ask forgiveness and welcome you.

P To those who do not see their identities represented in this church,

C we ask forgiveness and welcome you.

P To those who we, the church, have called “those people”,

C we ask forgiveness and welcome you.

P The Church is a place where we boldly proclaim and model welcome to each and every child of God. We confess that we have not always made that statement true, and as a result, have pushed away God’s Beloveds from our spaces. So we share today, proudly: that people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions matter; that Black, indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) matter; and that we as a church stand firmly against racism, homophobia, and transphobia. We seek forgiveness and commit to actions that will bring justice, equity, and healing to those harmed. We do all these things through God’s guidance and grace.

C Amen.



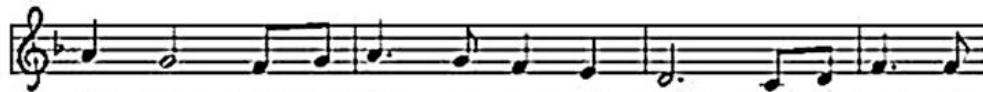
1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly
 2 Let us build a house where proph-ets speak, and words are strong and
 3 Let us build a house where love is found in wa - ter, wine and
 4 Let us build a house where hands will reach be - yond the wood and
 5 Let us build a house where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



Refrain
 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.

GREETING

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

C And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Assisting minister



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.



PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

God of Boundless love, you require each of us to love justice. May we follow Christ's example to see, name, and care for all whom we encounter. May your love and grace fill our words and actions, turning us away from the sins of homophobia, transphobia, and racism, to live for you and serve our neighbor. Soften our hearts and expand our awareness today to share in spirit of the Kin-dom of God, making the church a place where community is built to experience your grace. In your name, we pray.

C **Amen.**



+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Today's reading is part of a longer discourse in Deuteronomy, an updating of the law for the Israelite community as the people wait to enter the promised land. Here Moses assures the people that God will continue to guide them through prophets who will proclaim the divine word.

[Moses said:] ¹⁵The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. ¹⁶This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." ¹⁷Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. ¹⁹Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. ²⁰But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die."

Reader The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 111 *We sing the psalm responsively.*



Leader ¹Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with | my whole heart,
in the assembly of the upright, in the | congregation.

C ²Great are your | works, O LORD,
pondered by all who de- | light in them.

L ³Majesty and splendor | mark your deeds,
and your righteousness en- | dures forever.

C ⁴You cause your wonders to | be remembered;
you are gracious and full | of compassion.

L ⁵You give food to | those who fear you,
remembering forev- | er your covenant.

C ⁶You have shown your people the power | of your works
in giving them the lands | of the nations.

L ⁷The works of your hands are faithful- | ness and justice;
all of your pre- | cepts are sure.

C ⁸They stand fast forev- | er and ever,
because they are done in | truth and equity.

L ⁹You sent redemption to your people and commanded your cove- | nant forever;
holy and awesome | is your name.

C ¹⁰The fear of the LORD is the begin- | ning of wisdom;
all who practice this have a good understanding. God's praise
en- | dures forever.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

C **Amen.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Paul is concerned about the way some Corinthian Christians use their freedom in Christ as license to engage in non-Christian behavior that sets a damaging example to other, impressionable believers. Christians have a responsibility to each other that their behavior does not cause another to sin.

¹Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ²Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; ³but anyone who loves God is known by him.

⁴Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.” ⁵Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

⁷It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸“Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? ¹¹So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. ¹²But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

Reader The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Mark 1:21-28

Forces that would bring death and disease have taken hold of a man, yet they recognize Jesus and know what his power means for them. Jesus commands these forces to leave and people are amazed at his authority.

P The holy gospel according to Mark, the first chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

²¹[Jesus and his disciples] went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught.²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

P The gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

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

HYMN OF THE DAY

For All the Children - David Lohman



1 God, we gath - er as your peo - ple To
 2 Oh, we sing for all the chil - dren, That
 3 Oh, we pray for all the young lives Cut
 4 God, we're work - ing for the fu - ture When



raise our song a - bove, And we dare to claim the
 one day they be free; And we sing for gen - er -
 short by fear and shame So a - fraid of who they
 chil - dren far and wide, Can— live their lives with



pro - mise of Your love, ———— Though the
 a - tions yet to be, ———— That they
 are and whom they love. ———— May the
 dig - ni - ty and pride. ———— As they



day may not yet be here, We— trust it soon will
 nev - er have a rea - son To— doubt that they are
 mess - age now be ban - ished That Your love is for the
 grow in strength and sta - ture, May they join us hand in



be, When your chil - dren— will be free. ————
 blest. May they, in Your— love, find rest. ————
 few, May their faith in— You re - new. ————
 hand, As a - gainst all— hate we stand. ————

REFRAIN

— O, may our hearts and minds be o - pened, Fling the
 church doors o - pen wide. May there be room e - nough for
 ev - 'ry - one in - side. ————— For in God there is a
 wel - come, In God we all be - long. May that
 wel - come — be our song. —————

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P Trusting in the One who made us, dwells in us, and calls us to life, we pray for the world, the church, and all in need.

A brief silence.

P Creator and endless weaver of our lives, we rejoice in your creation and its endless diversity. Your creativity and imagination create a sense of awe-filled wonder. As your care for creation is shown in its complexity and the changing of the seasons, teach us to see and celebrate the stunning beauty in all you have made. Embolden us to work for climate and creation justice to preserve our tactile connection to you through creation. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

P God who has made flesh, we ask for your forgiveness as we fall short to see you embodied in those around us. Give us eyes to see you in the lives of those targeted by police violence; those kicked out of their home because of who they are and who they love; those whose families have been destroyed by forced separations at our country's borders; and for those we have yet to see due to our fears. God, you know

what it is like to be cast out. May your Spirit fill us with the courage, conviction, and dedication to work for justice knowing when we do, we are in fact caring for you.
God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

P Healer and comforter, as each day brings new wonderings about the health of our family, friends, community, and nation, we remember that you can hold all we bring to you through prayer with sacred love. With hearts of joy and lament, we bring you the names and places of your people in need, speaking them aloud or in the silence of our hearts. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

P God of the unknown, all that you are and all that you have been is without boundaries. Open our hearts and minds to the new possibilities that surround each day. Help us to remember that through your love we are made new with each sunrise and filled with your Spirit in every breath. May this moment of worship be a touchstone of remembrance that we have something new to see and learn. Give us space to listen and see what you are showing us. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

P Help us to see and love people we don't know yet, so we might continue to greet you in faith and be joyfully changed by who you are: wild and wonderfully endless in your diversity. Whisper sweet Spirited inspirations in our ears. Bless this community of faith with challenges to grow us, care to wrap us up when we are wounded, and an abiding fire for the justice you are bringing. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

P Into your hands, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unlimited capacity for love and mercy, through your grace.

C Amen.



+MEAL+

OFFERING

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

OFFERING HYMN

We lift our voic-es, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you: we are an
of-fer-ing. Lord, use our voic-es, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our
lives, they are yours: we are an of-fer-ing. All that we have, all that we are,
all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you.
We lift our voic-es, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you:
we are an of-fer-ing, we are an of-fer-ing.

Text: Dwight Liles, b. 1957
Music: Dwight Liles
Text and music © 1984 Word Music, LLC

OFFERING
PM

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, God of justice and accompaniment, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You made us all in your image; in the Spirit of abounding love and creativity you formed us. You sent us your advocate so that we can know how to advocate for our beloveds as you strengthen us to love and uphold one another. 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

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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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.

At this table make us your body.
Form us to be a people of justice and peace.
Fill us with gratitude and generosity
That we may bear the fruit of love in word and deed.
Come, Holy Spirit.

C Come, Holy Spirit.

P Nourish our bodies to that we may be fed.
Teach us to see You, Christ, in those around us.
As we prepare this table for you,
We prepare our hearts for your presence.
Come, Holy Spirit.

C Come, Holy Spirit.

P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

C Our creator in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Beloved: here is bread; here is wine. Here is Jesus. Come and be fed.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN *Impartial, Compassionate God of All Love (vs. 1, 2 & 4)*

1. Im - par - tial, com - pass - ion - ate God of all lives,
 2. Un - ho - ly, un - just - i - fied fear we in - cite,
 3. Cre - a - tor of beau - ty, we stand not in pride,
 4. Our hope is your free - dom for both great and small,
 5. All hon - or - we give you, O help us to see,

in Christ you have shown us your love ac - tual - ized,
 when we shun our neigh - bors yet cling to our rights.
 we do not as - sume you will stay on our side.
 to strive for per - fec - tion and know all means all.
 your chil - dren are wor - thy to claim vic - to - ry.

in - car - nate and weak in the arms of the poor,
 Your chil - dren still wan - der the streets left in pain,
 For yours is the sa - cred, un - tar - nished by sin,
 We chal - lenge and quest - ion each law with - out grace,
 And so let our ac - tions flow out of our praise,

de - stroy - ing all sys - tems that keep closed the door.
 we pass laws a - gainst them to prove our dis - dain.
 a re - fuge for out - casts that all may come in.
 af - firm - ing the im - age of Christ on each face.
 to seek trans - for - ma - tion, your Kin - dom to raise.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Christ Jesus,
at this table we have feasted on your very life and are strengthened for our journey.
Send us forth from this banquet nourished in body and in spirit to proclaim your
good news and serve others in your name.

C **Amen.**

+ SENDING +

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

P God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the
comforter **✝** keep you in peace.

C **Amen.**


ANNOUNCEMENTS



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for
 2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for
 3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for
 4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
 has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
 bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
 shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
 to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.


Refrain



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell

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DISMISSAL

P Siblings in Christ, let us go out into the world in peace; love boldly; proclaim loudly; welcome, include, and celebrate our Black, Brown, Indigenous, People of Color and LGBTQIA+ siblings; and enter back into this space knowing that welcome is a priority in this church.

Stand strong against injustices of this world; and let this faith community be a place of care and renewal for as people of God we are called to action.

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.

P Beloved, go in peace. Work for justice, encounter God in all you see, and know you are LOVED!

C Thanks be to God.

+ + +

Sundays and Seasons v.20200805.1416
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**FLOWERS ARE GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD
AND DEDICATED TO KRIS KNAB.
WE MISS THAT SMILE, SHARP MIND and
CARING SPIRIT.
NATHAN, ERIN, and DOUG**

Calendar for January 31 - February 7

Jan.	31	Sun.	10:00 am	Worship with Communion (online), RIC Sunday
Feb.	3	Wed.	Noon	Bible study
Feb.	7	Sun.	10:00 am	Worship (online), Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

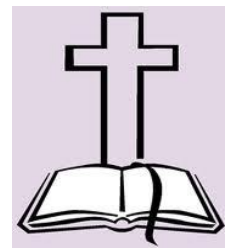
Next Sunday's Readings, Fifth Sunday after Epiphany:

[Isaiah 40:21-31](#)

[Psalms 147:1-11, 20c](#)

[1 Corinthians 9:16-23](#)

[Mark 1:29-39](#)



PRAYER REQUESTS

New concerns: Mark Canning for treatment of heart condition; prayers for healing for Margaret Bowers and her husband both diagnosed with COVID; Mark Eagelfeld (friend of Judi Duffy), being treated for COVID.

For the sick: Val Sullivan; Margarete Decker (mother of Caroline Collins); Don Dowd; Isabelle Taylor (granddaughter of Bill & Connie Taylor); being treated for rheumatoid arthritis and Primary Immunodeficiency; Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Dan Graney (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Jamie Ann Meyers (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White); Gerhard Hofer (brother-in-law of Ridy Hofer).

In treatment for cancer: Stephanie Barber; Cathie Nitti (niece of Sharon Simmons); Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; Maggie Soff (friend of Sandy Sampson); James Sablan (brother of Donna Schiffer); Isabell Cintron (friend of Sharon Simmons); Sarah Lucas (friend of Cassandra White); Bruce Blubaum (cousin of Sharon Simmons); Tiffany Nuce and unborn baby (family of Barbara ODonnell); Chris Dickman (synod councilmember); child of Pr. Katrina Foster (friend of Cheryl).

For health and protection: For all affected by coronavirus: those experiencing mental health difficulties due to isolation; those with the disease struggling to recover; those on the front lines fighting, researching and treating the disease (doctors, nurses, medical personal, EMT's, the millions of unemployed people, etc; all immigrant families split apart by US Government; for the unaccompanied children entering the US, including those unaccounted for".

For prisoners: Femi and Eddie; all those on death row.

Other concerns: Karen Olson; Blanche White (Melissa Barton).

Church concerns: St. Stephen's Congregational Council; The Florida-Bahamas Synod Council all congregations searching for ways to stay connected and proclaim the Good News;

Reconciling Works; Grace Lutheran Church; Bishop Pedro Suarez; Bishop Elizabeth Eaton; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Pensacola.

World concerns: For all recovering in the Florida Panhandle from Hurricane Michael, including Messiah Lutheran Church; the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands continuing to recover from hurricanes; migrants fleeing violence in Central America; all those migrants and asylum seekers imprisoned by the US government; the people of Venezuela (birthplace of Bp. Suarez) and Hong Kong; for the Supreme Court as it considers cases involving the LGBTQ community.