

St. Thomas Reformed Church  
St. Thomas, U. S. Virgin Islands  
Founded 1660



*September 5, 2021*

We Welcome One and All  
In the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ!  
Follow our service at

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasreformedchurch/live>

Or

<https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCvFA8vUToP3W257eL8pf4pw>

# Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost

*The liturgical color today is green representing the mission of the church!*

## “We Gather In God’s Presence...”

### Greeting and Ministry Updates

#### Call to Worship (*Psalm 146:1-2, 5-6*)

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth!

**Amen!**

Praise the LORD!

**Praise the LORD, O my soul!**

I will praise the LORD as long as I live;

**I will sing praises to my God all my life long.**

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,

**Whose hope is in the LORD their God,**

Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them;

**Who keeps faith forever.**

### Prayer

### Hymn

#### ‘Wonderful Words of Life’

*Philip P. Bliss*

Sing them over again to me, Wonderful words of life  
Let me more of their beauty see, Wonderful words of life  
Words of life and beauty teach me faith and duty

*Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of life  
Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of life*

Christ, the blessed one, gives to all, Wonderful words of life  
Sinner, list to the loving call, Wonderful words of life  
All so freely given, Wooing us to heaven. [*Refrain*]

Sweetly echo the gospel call, Wonderful words of life  
Offer pardon and peace to all, Wonderful words of life  
Jesus, only Savior, Sanctify forever. [*Refrain*]

### Call to Confession

## Unison Prayer of Confession

We say that we are good listeners, God of holy ways, but we turn stopped up ears to the vulnerable around us. We say that we live as your people, but too often, put ourselves ahead of the people we love. We say that we are people of faith, but then try to overwhelm people with words, rather than acts of service. We say so much, God of compassion, that we cannot hear you calling us to faithful living. Have mercy on us and send us out to offer kindness to the lonely. Have mercy on us and send us to be generous with the love you offer. Have mercy on us, so we might be open to all the chances we will have to follow, and to serve alongside our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ...

Response                    **'All the Poor and Powerless'**

*All Sons and Daughters*

All the poor and powerless, and all the lost and lonely  
And all the thieves will come confess, and know that You are holy  
And know that You are holy

*And all will sing out Hallelujah  
And we will cry out Hallelujah*

All the hearts who are content, and all who feel unworthy  
And all who hurt with nothing left, will know that You are holy

*Shout it! Go on and scream it from the mountains  
Go on and tell it to the masses that You are God*

## Words of Assurance and Hope

Hymn                        **'Come As You Are'**

Come out of sadness from wherever you've been  
Come broken-hearted let rescue begin  
Come find your mercy O sinner come kneel  
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't heal  
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't heal

*Lay down your burdens lay down your shame  
All who are broken lift up your face  
O wanderer come home  
You're not too far  
So lay down your hurt lay down your heart  
Come as you are*

There's hope for the hopeless and all those who've strayed  
Come sit at the table come taste the grace  
There's rest for the weary, rest that endures  
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't cure (*chorus*)

There's joy for the morning O sinner be still  
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't heal  
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't heal

## ... To Hear God's Word...

Scripture

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

Message

“Welcome Home”

Pastor Jeff Neevel

## And Respond With Gratitude...

Offering

Online giving available at [www.strcgiving.org](http://www.strcgiving.org)

Offertory

“This Little Light of Mine” featuring DJ Parson  
(recorded at STRC's Jazz Vespers August 1, 2021)

We Profess our Faith

Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
And born of the Virgin Mary.  
He 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,  
And is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
The holy Christian Church  
The communion of saints,  
The forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the body,  
And the life everlasting. Amen**

## **A Celebration of Communion**

*(You are invited to prepare the elements at home and partake together as the body of Christ.)*

May the God of holy ways be with you.

**May God be with you as well.**

Here we may come, to be fed by grace and hope.

**Here we offer our hollow hearts to our God.**

We will rejoice and praise God every chance we get.

**We will sing to our God in every moment of our lives.**

You came, God of Imagination, into the emptiness of chaos, your arms laden with the gifts of creation: honey dripping from combs in trees; cool, clear water rushing over rocks. These wonders, and so much more, were given to those you loved enough to form in your own image, so we might feast upon your goodness and bounty, but we scrambled around under death's tables, seeking to scoop up the crumbs of temptation. Prophets came over and over and over, their words, their lives, their hearts open calls for us to return to your side, but we turned hard hearts and fear-plugged ears to them.

Then, because you are our help, you sent your precious Hope to us, the One who would speak as you. With those who speak plainly, with those who have trouble changing their minds, we life our songs of thanksgiving to you:

**Holy, holy, holy are you, our God, now and always.  
All creation praises you every day, in every moment.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is the One opens us to your grace.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

In the baby born into poverty, you came, God of the vulnerable, to challenge the powerful and profane. In the young boy playing in the fields, you came, God of the faithful, to know our loneliness, as well as our joy. In the teacher who wove stories of wonder, you came, God of justice, to remind us that mercy triumphs over judgment, that inclusiveness welcomes every outsider. In the One broken on the cross, you came, God of life, to break the power of sin once and for all, to set us free from our fear of death.

As we remember the One who was willing to listen, as prepare to be fed by the One who was willing to learn, may we not be afraid to speak of that mystery we call faith:

**Jesus died, so we might find our hope in you;  
Jesus was raised, so we might find our help in you;  
Jesus will come, so we might find our life with you.**

In these moments, and in this place, you come, God of the feast, pouring out your Spirit on the bread and the cup and your family gathered around the Table. Though we would sweep out the crumbs of the broken bread, you gather them up to feed the most vulnerable with life, to bring healing to the broken, to offer community to the lonely. Though we would toss out the dregs of the cup, you would pass this grace to the refugee so they might find a welcome, to the marginalized so they would know they are loved, to the aged so they are not forgotten.

And when you have set us free from time's prison, you gather us around the feast of heaven where, with our sisters and brothers, we will sing your praises, now and always,  
God in Community, Holy in One. Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen.

## **Words of Institution**

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving after Communion**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

*David Haas Alternate tune*

#### **Benediction**

*Portions of today's liturgy © 2018 Thom M. Shuman*

## GIVING THANKS:

### Leading Worship Today:

Ministers: All of us viewing together  
Preaching: Pastor Jeff Neevel  
Liturgist: Pastor Ben Rowe  
Music: James Anderson-guitar, Emily Rowe-vocals  
Live Stream Team: James Anderson, James Cobb,  
Andrea King, Lucy Sutton, Dave Whitter

**Welcome and thank you** for joining us remotely.

**Join Rev. Rebecca Broom** as she shares “Exile and Return”: the story of the exile and return of God’s people from Jerusalem based on the book of Ezra, part of STRC’s Children & Worship Virtual series.

From Young Children and Worship © 1989 Sonja M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman

Here is the link. <https://youtu.be/ockApH8B75A>

## Lectionary Scripture Readings

**Proverbs 1:20-33; Psalm 19**

**Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 116:1-9**

**James 3:1-12; Mark 8:27-38**

## Message from the STRC Consistory

Praying all is well with you. As you know, Covid cases are on the rise in the VI. Based on a 10%+ positivity rate Consistory has voted YES on the following:

STRC is doing its part to help stop the spread of Covid-19 and its Delta variant. **All Sunday services will be live-stream ONLY with a target date of regathering on Sunday, September 26.** The STRC

Sanctuary and meeting rooms will be closed immediately for deep cleaning. No in-person meetings will be scheduled until further notice.

**Please do your part:** wear a mask in public, observe social distancing protocols, avoid mass gatherings and get vaccinated!

**Join us in prayer** for all those directly affected by this virus and for the health and safety of our medical professionals and staff working on the front lines.

**We walk by faith** and not by fear. By faith, we know we will get through this... together!

## Contact Information

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