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Our Mission Statement

St. Stephen's is a welcoming, healing community who worship
God in Christ, nurture people growing in faith,
serve others with acceptance and love,
invite people to share the joy of the spirit.

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church E.L.C.A.

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Office Hours: Mon.—Thurs. 8:30 am—2:30 pm

Ministers: The People of St. Stephen's

Pastor: Rev. James P. Lapp

Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp

Music Director: Gary Roberts

Sunday School: Leslie Lapp

Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens

Custodian: John Hopping

Videographers: Kent Madsen & Barb Rice

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Sixth Sunday of Easter May 17, 2020

Welcome to people new to this church or faith, long time Lutherans, and Christians from every tradition. Welcome to all who have no church home, want to follow Christ, have doubts, or do not believe. Welcome to new visitors and old friends. Welcome to people of every age and size, color and culture, sexual orientation and marital status, ability and challenge. Welcome to believers and questioners and questioning believers. This is a place where you are welcome to celebrate and sorrow, rejoice and recover. This is a place where lives are made new. Welcome on this day.

(*) Asterisk means, "Please stand as you are able."

The Gathering

*Call to Worship

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

P: O radiant God, in the midst of fragile hopes and shattered dreams, you worked your brightest surprise—

C: The shining glory of the risen Christ.

P: Even now, you are birthing new hopes and prompting new dreams.

C: Our eyes are open wide—

P: Seeing your glory in the springtime blossoms,

C: Noticing that your blessing leaves a calm in our hearts,

P: And a patience in our voices,

C: Sensing your presence in the breaking of bread,

P: The comfort of a friend and the planting of a seed.

C: O radiant God, with songs of praise and hearts of gladness, we worship you as beams of joy and candles of hope!

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

ELCA Sierra Pacific Synod News

With each passing week of living through this COVID-19 Pandemic, new questions emerge. Questions about whether we are seeing a decrease in the number of people being infected, hospitalized, admitted to critical care units, or dying from Coronavirus. Questions about how soon we will be allowed to relax some of the restrictions that have been in place to prevent the spread of this virus. Questions about how soon businesses will be able to re-open and life will get back to "normal." Questions about how we will be church together – now and in the weeks and months to come.

Later this week, Presiding Bishop Eaton and our ELCA Church-wide Organization will be releasing a document entitled, "Worship in Times of Public Health Concerns: Returning to Public Worship – Being Church Together during the COVID-19 Pandemic." We hope it will be a helpful guide for leaders in our congregations to use as we seek to eventually come together in a manner that is in keeping with our concerns for the most vulnerable among us and with government restrictions.

Which begs a challenging question for us to consider: How does a synod as large and diverse as our Sierra Pacific Synod respond to the many different government entities that are issuing orders for how and when restrictions will end? We are a synod of 185 congregations and other ministries in two states and over 50 different counties. How do we reconcile the different messages that are being offered in these states and counties? There is confusion, and rightly so, when we hear one government authority speaking with one voice, and another speaking a different message.

Thank you for the creative ways you are being church together in this time. It has been gift and grace to know of the ways you have responded in faith to meet the needs of the people we are called to serve. May we be blessed and a blessing as we continue to shelter in place and serve as we are able. Take care.

Peace, Bp. Mark Holmerud

*Dismissal

P: Go in the power of the Spirit.
Proclaim the risen Lord. Alleluia, alleluia!

C: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!**

Prayer Concerns

Short Term: Healthcare workers, Robert Bartee & Family, Heather, Kevin, Family of Suzanne Duval, Vanessa, Rose, Shelly Barker & family, George Webber & Family, Cox Family, Becky & Aaron Johnson, Marlene Simmen, Lorraine Chavez, Kimberly & Danny, Lora Schraft Poulson, Doug Hahn, Michael, Kayla, Don, Lina, Katarina, Taiyo, Mateo, Stephanie Jager, Cabel, Kyle, Esdras, Jackson, Joe, Pat, Riley, Shelby, Frank, Kaitlyn, Daniel, Ryder, Jenny, Abby, Immigrant families, The Homeless, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen's Child Development Ctr, Pastor Jim and Our Church Family.

Long Term: people of the Bahamas, The Sanders Family, Barbara & John Bartee, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, Susan Anderson, Rick, Bobbie Erickson, Edna Lindquist, Richard C., Eric VonSchell, Lauri Hollist, Ken Pahel, Pat M., Gary, Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Barry & Barbara, Chris & Lorie Juhl, Karin, Will, Chris, Pat Hubbard, Cathy, Pearl Runquist, Volpi & Robe Family, men and women of Armed Forces, and the Youth of today

May Benevolence = Mt. Cross Lutheran Outdoor Ministries

*Opening Hymn

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" Red #631

**Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heav'n to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation, enter ev'ry trembling heart.**

**Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit
into ev'ry troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit; let us find thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.**

**Come, Almighty, to deliver; let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect
love.**

**Finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee!
Changed from glory into glory, till in heav'n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!**

*Greeting

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen
C: **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

P: The grace of our risen Savior,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

C: **And also with you**

*Prayer of the Day

The Word of God

<u>First Reading</u>	Acts 17:22-31	Celebrate pg. 1
Read Responsively	Psalms 66:8-20	Celebrate pg. 2
<u>Second Reading</u>	1 Peter 3:13-22	Celebrate pg. 2
<u>*Gospel Reading</u>	John 14:15-21	Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 14th chapter. *(The Gospel is read)*

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Message

Rev. James Lapp

*Hymn of the Day

"Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love" Red #708

REFRAIN

**Jesu, Jesu,
fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbors we have from you.**

**Kneels at the feet of his friends,
silently washes their feet,
Master who acts as a slave to them.**

REFRAIN

(continued)

*Post Communion Prayer

P: Let us pray:

In this meal, O God, you have strengthened us by the risen life of your Son. Send us by your Spirit to live in peace with one another and to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

*Benediction

P: God, who raised Jesus from the dead,
Make you stand strong in faith.

C: Amen. Alleluia!

P: Jesus Christ, triumphant over the grave,
Make you bold to tell the good news.

C: Amen. Alleluia!

P: The Spirit of truth abide with you
And guide you into paths of service.

C: Amen. Alleluia!

*Closing Hymn

"Goodness Is Stronger Than Evil" #721 (repeat 3 times)

**Goodness is stronger than evil;
Love is stronger than hate;
Light is stronger than darkness;
Life is stronger than death;
vict'ry is ours, vict'ry is ours,
Through God who loves us.
Vict'ry is ours, vict'ry is ours,
Through God who loves us.**

Holy Communion

Communion Hymns

“Jesus Loves Me” Red #595

**Jesus loves me! This I know,
for the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to him belong,
they are weak, but he is strong.**

REFRAIN

**Yes, Jesus loves me, yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.**

**Jesus loves me! He who died
heaven’s gates to open wide;
He will wash away my sin,
let his little child come in.**

REFRAIN

**Jesus loves me! He will stay
close beside me all the way;
When at last I come to die,
he will take me home on high.**

REFRAIN

The Sending

*Communion Blessing

P: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: **Amen**

**Neighbors are wealthy and poor,
varied in color and race;
neighbors are nearby and far away.** REFRAIN

**These are the ones we will serve,
these are the ones we will love;
all these are neighbors to us and you.** REFRAIN

**Kneel at the feet of our friends,
silently washing their feet;
this is the way we will live with you.** REFRAIN

Easter Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God,

**Who lights the dawn to chase away the darkness;
Who rolls away each stone of doubt;
Who surprises us with incredible gifts of family and friends,
silence and laughter;
Who raises us from sadness and despair
to the possibilities of blessing and joy.**

We believe in Jesus,

**Friend of the poor and searcher for the lost,
Who comes to us in our grief and longing, calls us by name
and sends us on the paths of peace to speak of an awesome
love that is not overcome by death.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit,

**The hidden partner, the gentle messenger of God,
Who fills our every breath with blessing;
Who guides us in the dark, beckons us to do good,
speaks to us in dream and image,
and watches over us with tender compassion.**

We believe in the church,

**An instrument of God in this present moment, striving for
justice, celebrating in joy, clawing at despair, living in hope,
praying for healing and forever proclaiming Good News of
God’s persistent and redeeming love.**

The Communion Meal

* Passing of the Peace

P: May the peace of God be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Offering — We honor and worship God by returning some of the gifts with which we have been blessed.

Offertory Prayer

P: Giver of life,

**C: We bring to your table what we have, gifts from you,
the one who makes all things new.
With these signs we bring ourselves,
that we may carry to the world
the love of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

*Great Thanksgiving

P: May God be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to God

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

*Prayer of Preparation

P: We prepare our hearts to receive God's grace together now.

C: Generous God, you have given us so much. Give us one more thing. Give us thankful hearts because we know our hearts can turn hard and cold. We hold on when we should let go. We are clutching when we should be sharing. We are fearful instead of trusting in your everlasting care.

Open our hands and our hearts to the bounty of your love, which cares for the flowers of the fields, the birds in the air, each child who toddles, every parent who worries, every adult who struggles.

Loving God, you have given us so much. Give us again the assurance of your love and care, and fill us with grateful hearts and open hands. Amen.

*Words of Institution

*Lord's Prayer

**C: Our Father, in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is 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**

P: The gifts of God for the people of God.
Come for all is ready!

(You may be seated)