

Whoever  
is faithful in  
a very little  
is faithful  
also in  
much

LUKE 16:10

# 15th Sunday after Pentecost

September 21, 2025

10:00 a.m.

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.

Please fill out the “Worship Slip” and place it in the offering plate.

( \* ) Asterisk means, “Please stand as you are able.”

Music “Adagio Cantata” J. S. Bach

## The 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 forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

C: **Amen.**

P: Seeking reconciliation with God and neighbor,  
let us remember the gift of baptism and confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: God of mercy

C: **We confess that we have sinned against you,  
Against one another,**

**And against the earth entrusted to our care.  
We are worried and distracted by many things,  
And we fail to love you above all else.  
We store up treasures for ourselves  
And turn away from our neighbors in need.  
Forgive us,  
that we may live in the freedom of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**P:** When we were laid low by sin and the world's evil,  
God made us alive together with Christ,  
Forgiving us + all our trespasses  
By taking the sin of the world to the cross.  
For freedom Christ has set us free:  
Rejoice in this good news!

**C: Amen.**

\*Opening Hymn      “Look Who Gathers at Christ’s Table”  
Blue #977

**Look who gathers at Christ’s table!  
Hear the stories that they bring.  
Some are weeping; Some are laughing;  
Some have songs they want to sing.  
Others ask why they’re invited,  
Burdened by the wrong they’ve done.  
Christ insists they all are welcome.  
There is room for ev’ry one.**

**Clouds of light surround the table;  
Ancient followers appear,  
saints confessing how they wrestled  
with their guilt, their doubt and fear.  
Peter tells of his denying  
Christ was ever in his sight;  
Paul relates his fruitless efforts  
to obliterate the light.**

(hym continued)

Their sad stories are repeated  
in a thousand different ways,  
But they share one thing in common;  
They all end in thanks and praise  
for the host who has invited  
north and south and east and west  
to converge around this table,  
Where all life is fed and blest.

Bring your joy and bring your sadness,  
and prepare to be surprised  
by the host whose hands are wounded,  
who will open wide your eyes  
when he blesses bread and breaks it—  
truth and manna from above! ~  
and then passes wine that wakens  
in your heart the taste of love.

\*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**

\*Kyrie & Hymn of Praise

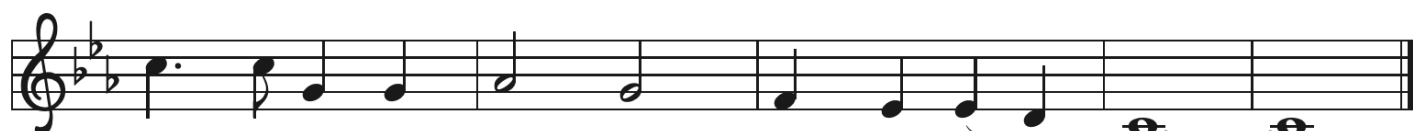
Blue #31



Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.



Chris - te e - lei - son. Christ, have mer - cy.



Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.



1 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;  
2 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;  
3 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;



yours is the prom - ise, the bless - ing, the birth.  
yours the ho - san - nas, the dy - ing, re - birth.  
yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.



Ours the re - joic - ing for Word giv - en frame;  
Ours the re - joic - ing for na - ture re - claimed;  
Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;



ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.



Ours be the tell - ing of deeds great - ly done;



yours be the glo - ry, O God, yours a - lone.

\*Prayer of the Day

**The Word of God**

First Reading                      Amos 8:4-7                      Celebrate pg. 1

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

Psalm              Psalm 113              Choir with congregation response  
Celebrate pg. 2

Second Reading                      1 Timothy 2:-1-7                      Celebrate pg. 3

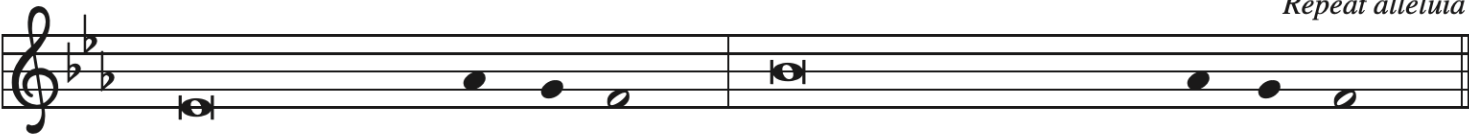
R: Word of God, Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

\*Gospel Acclamation    Blue #33



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



*Repeat alleluia*

Lord, to whom    shall we go?              You have the words of e - ter - nal    life.



\*Gospel Reading

Luke 16:1-13

Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Holy Gospel acc. to St. Luke, the 16th Chapter

C: **Glory to you. O God.**

*(The Gospel is read)*

P: This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ

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

*(Please be seated)*

God Stories

Message

Christa Wyneken Garcia (Our Seminarian)

\*Hymn of the Day

*“Build a Longer Table” Blue#1062*

*Build a longer table, not a higher wall,  
Feeding those who hunger, making room for all.  
Feasting together, stranger turns to friend,  
Christ breaks walls to pieces;  
False divisions end.*

*Build a safer refuge, not a larger jail;  
Where the weak find shelter, mercy will not fail.  
For any place where justice is denied,  
Christ will breach the jail wall, freeing all inside.*

*Build a broader doorway, not a longer fence.  
Love protects all people, sparing no expense.  
When we embrace compassion more than fear,  
Christ tears down our fences; all are welcome here.*

*When we lived as exiles, refugees abroad,  
Christ became our doorway to the reign of God.  
So must our tables welcome those who roam.  
None can be excluded; all must find a home.*

## **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.

Music      “The Right Hand of God” Red #889

### Offering Prayer

P: Blessed are you, O God,  
For the greening earth given for all,  
For the talents we are given to share,  
And for this bread and fruit of the vine.  
Transform us to be the body of Christ,  
That, feasting on this food and drink,  
Our lives may reflect your generosity;  
Through Christ our Lord,

C: **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.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our JOY...

\*Words of Institution

\*Lord's Prayer

**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**

P: God invites you to this table of bounty.  
Come, the banquet is ready.

(Please be seated)

### Communion Gathering Song



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, grant us peace.

### Communion Hymn

*“Amazing Grace”* Red #779

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found  
Was blind, but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come  
Tis grace has brought me safe thus far  
And grace will lead me home

The Lord has promised good to me;  
His word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
than when we'd first begun.

## The Sending

### \*Prayer after Communion

P: O God, in this Holy Communion  
You have welcomed us into your presence,  
Nourished us with words of mercy,  
And fed us at your table.  
Amid the cares of this life,  
Strengthen us to love you with all our heart,  
Serve our neighbors with a willing spirit,  
And honor the earth you have made;  
Through Christ our Lord. C: **Amen**

### \*Blessing

P: Live your lives in Christ,  
rooted and built up in God's Spirit.  
May you abound in thanksgiving;  
And may the blessing of the holy Trinity, + one God,  
Be upon you and remain with you forever.  
C: **Amen**

\*Closing Hymn    “Rise Up, O Saints of God!”    Red #669

Rise up, O saints of God! From vain ambitions turn;  
Christ rose triumphant that your hearts  
with nobler zeal might burn.

Speak out, O saints of God!  
Despair engulfs earth's frame;  
As heirs of God's baptismal grace,  
The word of hope proclaim.

Rise up, O saints of God!  
The kingdom's task embrace;  
Redress sin's cruel consequence;  
Give justice larger place.

Give heed, O saints of God! Creation cries in pain;  
Stretch forth your hand of healing now,  
With love the weak sustain.

Commit your hearts to seek  
the paths which Christ has trod;  
And, quickened by the Spirit's pow'r,  
rise up, O saints of God!

\*Dismissal

**P:**    Go in Peace, Christ is sending you.

**C:**    **Thanks be to God.**

Music    “At the Lamb's High Feast” Charles Ore



The Altar Flowers are given  
By Susan Oldfield  
In memory of Rick

**Serving Today**

Reader: Mark Linder

Coffee Host: Rebecca Wickham

Altar Guild: Connie Cunningham

Office Support: Sheila Buswell & Sherilyn Jager

**SHORT TERM:** Charlotte & family, Tim Oldfield, Kathy M., Georgina Beyer's family, Nancy, Jennifer Linkeon, Corrine & Daniel, Connie Garcia & Family, Laura, Family of Elizabeth Schilling, Tina & family, Family of Patrick McCalmont, Atlas, Ana, Kathybelle Barlow, Family & friends of Rev. Jim Carr, Family of Ed Valencia, Family of Tex Ronning, Grey, Levi, Lisa J., Unemployed, Nick, James, Mary D., Galahad, Debbie, Sam, Nate Barker, Robbin, Francisco, Keith, Noelle, Ensley, Middle East Peace, Tom Dawson, Taiyo, Marissa, Isaac, Dustin, Father Jack Davis, Sandi Csik, Sam, Adolfo, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Allen, Gary & Marjie Toops, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Isaac & Marissa, Mateo & Lina, Don, Atlas, Sal, Katarina, Stephanie Jager.

**LONG TERM:** Those suffering with Mental Illness, James Sheehan, Biergiel—Colclough family, Eric Utto-Galarneau, Joel Hurtgamm, Dawit and family (Ethiopia), Miller, April, Aaron Johnson, Shelby, Ashley, Frank, Joe, Dom, Lisa & Beau, Linda Johnson, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, Bobbie Erickson, Mike, Susan Anderson, Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Karin, Will, Chris & John B. Immigrant families, The Homeless, People of Ukraine, People of Palestine/Israel, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen's Child Development Ctr, S.S. Senior Housing, Pastor Jim & Our Church Family, men & women of Armed Forces, and the Youth of today.

\* Please notify when to remove \*



## MUSIC AT ST. STEPHENS

**Choir Fest** Thanks choir for the great food and fellowship we will do it again.

**Invitation to join Good News Singers** is always open in the choir. Bring an instrument and share your talents with us., your voice, spirit, and praising God through music.

**Christmas choir** Please consider joining and be a member of a Christmas ensemble. It would be so great to see 20 strong celebrating Jesus in a choir.

**Taize worship** I'm still working on printing songs for this special time. Together we will have a booklet with introduction, and music available for everyone.

“Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God,  
believe also in me. I will not leave you.  
Peace I leave with you always.”

Yours in Christ & Mission,  
Gary



## Habitat Update

It has been about a year since we last provided lunches to the volunteers, but that does not mean the organization is at a standstill. Habitat for Humanity Monterey Bay's administrative office, currently located in Santa Cruz, will consolidate the staff office space with the Watsonville Restore location. Habitat's dedicated construction volunteers have taken on this rehab project, which is scheduled for completion in early September. A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is tentatively scheduled for **October 1, time TBD**. The next home builds will likely break ground in September 2025— a 14-unit home development in Watsonville, at Evan Circle, and another 9-unit home development in Marina, at Marina Station. Applications for homeownership, for both locations will open October 20, 2025.

## New Ways of Giving

Our *Virtual Offering Plate* has been enhanced. Donations can be made by: credit card, debit card, PayPal, Venmo and Zelle.

1) **Vanco**, our regular electronic giving provider;

2) **PayPal / Venmo / Zelle** for single one-time gifts;

3) **PayPal** with the possibility of recurring donations and an option to cover the fees.

All are available at  
<https://ststephenslutheran.org>  
Or by scanning this QR code.







On ZOOM  
with Pr. Jim

Check email on  
Tues. for link

**WEDNESDAYS**  
7:30 – 8:30 pm

*As we grow in our faith, we grow in community.*

Our Preschool is enrolling NOW.  
Ages 2-4  
Full & Part Time openings.  
Tell your friends!  
Contact Kathy 462-4453



**Trinity Tuesday**

***One Hour ~ One Question ~ One Beverage***

**Tuesday, October 7 at 6:30pm @ Discretion Brew**

Informal faith conversations in a welcoming, relaxed setting. Explore one thoughtful question together - from deep theological mysteries to everyday questions about how faith intersects with life.

Kathy Allen 430-6359



## **Sister Parish news**

### **El Pilar Projects**

After our November 2024 visit, local leaders held public meetings and community members voted on current priorities. Las Orquídeas and Bendicion de Dios (often referred to together as “**El Pilar**”) identified their top needs:

- **Las Orquídeas:** piped water to all 75 homes so families would not have to use the hand pump wells multiple times a day for their water needs.
- **Bendicion de Dios:** a community building where they could host meetings, events and have a room that could be used for medical exams.

We thought the Las Orquideas water project would be a multi-year effort, but now we have an incredible opportunity to partner with another organization and complete the work this year. However, we need an additional \$10,000 for both projects. Join us to benefit these projects:

### **Watsonville Public House Fundraiser**

“Prime the Pump”

**October 11 at 2:00 pm**

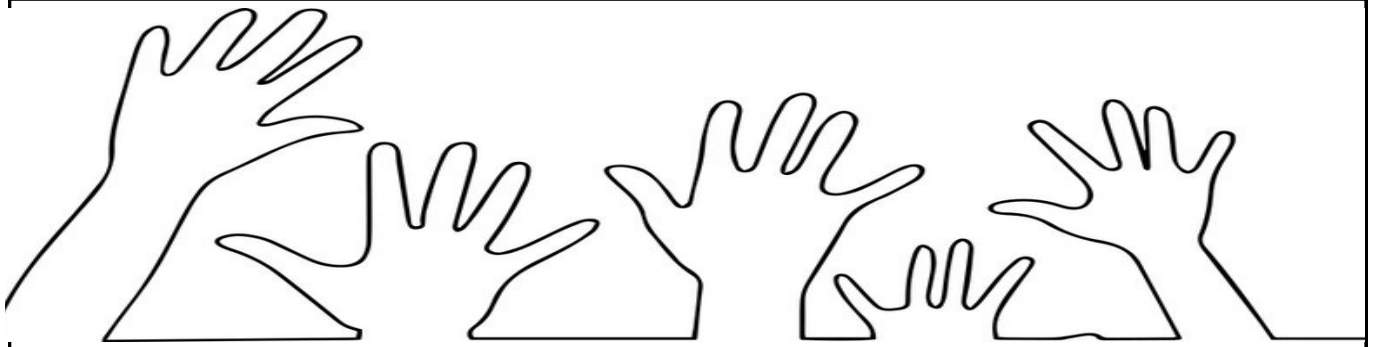
Tickets are \$35; more details and tickets at [santacruzalsalvador.org](http://santacruzalsalvador.org). Tickets may also be purchased from Jeanne Boudreau or Kent Madsen.

### **2025 DELEGATION**

**Monday, November 24 to Wednesday, December 3**

Deposits are due October 1

Contact us if you would like to join this year’s delegation. The agenda is being developed.



## MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK

So many creative ideas for fellowship this Fall. The time is NOW. We are looking for Thrivent Members to apply for a Action Team Grants for these two events. Contact for info.

REFORMATION SUNDAY OKTOBER-FEAST  
OCT. 26

ST. NICKS SURPRISES FOR SENIORS  
DEC. 5

In Partner with MMRR circle

- - -

Other ways to help:

PROPERTY WORK DAY : paint, weed & dump run  
OCT. 4

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT: Big coffee hour.  
Bring snacks & juice boxes DEC. 7

# Upcoming Events:

September Benevolence Offering -  
St. Stephen's Child Development Center

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Sept. 23    | Scouts 6:00 pm   |
| Sept. 24    | Preschool Chapel 10:15                                       |
| Sept. 24    | Bible Study Weds. 7:30 pm                                    |
| Sept. 25    | Mens beginner A.A. Thursdays 7:00 pm Fireside                |
| Sept. 25    | Newsletter Collating 2:00 pm                                 |
| Sept. 26    | A.A. Fridays 7:00 pm Fellowship Hall                         |
| Oct. 2 & 16 | Women's Café Group 6:00 pm Thursdays<br>Dinner and devotions |
| Oct. 4      | Property work day  |
| Oct. 5      | Blessing of the Animals                                      |
| Oct. 7      | Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm - Discretion Brew 41st               |
| Oct. 9      | MMRR Circle 10:30 am   |
| Oct. 26     | * Reformation Polka Mass & Oktoberfeast *                    |

**Pastor's Office Hours Wed & Thurs. 10:00 to 1:00**

## 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.

### Reconciling in Christ

*"We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace.  
We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of  
race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity,  
gender expression, or relationship status.  
We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or  
mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic  
circumstances, or anything that too often divides us.  
Our unity is in Christ."*

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church E.L.C.A.  
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Web Address: [www.ststephenslutheran.org](http://www.ststephenslutheran.org)  
Office Hours: Mon.—Fri. Noon—5:00 pm

Ministers: The People of St. Stephen's  
Pastor: Rev. James P. Lapp  
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp  
Music Director: Gary Roberts  
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens  
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp  
Custodian: John Hopping  
Powerpoint: Jay Johnston, Kent Madsen & Barbara Rice

Music used by permission Onelicense #A-706539