



IN MY
FATHER'S
HOUSE
THERE ARE MANY
DWELLING
PLACES

JOHN 14:2



Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2026

the news is...

Matthew 28:1-10

alive in the world

Welcome to people new to this church or faith, long time Lutherans, and Christians and faiths 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 & questioning believers. This is a place where you are welcome to celebrate & sorrow, rejoice & recover. This is a place where lives are made new.

Welcome on this GLORIOUS day!

Please fill out the "Worship Slip" and place it in the offering plate during the offering, as a sign of thanksgiving for all of God's blessings.

Prelude "Pastoral Symphony" from Messiah, F. F. Handel

Gathering

Call to Worship

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

On Good Friday, we thought the good news had been silenced.

On Good Friday, we thought the good news had taken its last breath.

On Good Friday, we thought the good news had been buried.

But today, we know the good news is alive and well.

The good news is dancing!

The good news is on the loose!

The good news is out in the world, calling your name!

Alleluia! Even death has lost its sting.

Let us worship our good-news Christ.

Call to Confession

Friends, on Easter Sunday we remembered
that the world did its worst to God.

The world battered and bruised,
betrayed and abandoned,
crucified and buried our living God.

And despite it all, Jesus *still* chose to return.

Jesus rose again and immediately went to work
spreading God's love to the very people who had hurt him.

So hear me when I say, there is *nothing* you can do
that could keep God's love at bay.

With that good news mind, let us go to God in prayer,
trusting that Jesus Christ loves, claims, and seeks us.

Friends, let us pray:

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God,

we want to be Easter people.

We want to shout your good news from the rooftop.

We want to follow the disciples, who ran to look for you.

**We want to follow the angels, who said, "Be not afraid,"
but sometimes, we are afraid.**

And we don't know where to look.

And we are worried we'll say the wrong thing.

So forgive us, for we are imperfect Easter people.

We are best intentions and best laid plans.

We are an out-of-tune chorus of "alleluias."

We are on our way, but we are not there yet.

Show us how to embody your good news in this world.

Show us how to be your Easter people.

With hope for tomorrow, we pray, Amen.

Words of Forgiveness

Family of faith,
even when we are an out-of-tune chorus of “Alleluias,”
we belong to God.
Jesus died and rose for you.
And there is nothing that could keep God’s love at bay.
So join me in this good news declaration:

**Through Jesus Christ we are seen, saved, loved, and claimed.
This is the good news of the gospel! Thanks be to God. Amen.**

*Opening Hymn

“Bring Many Names”

Blue #1094

*Bring many names, beautiful and good,
Celebrate, in parable and story,
Holiness in glory, living, loving God.
Hail and hosanna! Bring many names!*

*Strong mother God, working night and day,
Planning all the wonders of creation,
Setting each equation, genius at play:
Hail and Hosanna, strong mother God!*

*Warm father God, hugging every child,
Feeling all the strains of human living,
Caring and forgiving, till we’re reconciled:
Hail and Hosanna, warm father God!*

*Old, aching God, grey with endless care,
Calmly piercing evil’s new disguises,
Glad of good surprises, wiser than despair:
Hail and Hosanna, old, aching God!*

*Young, growing God, eager, on the move,
Saying no to falsehood and unkindness,
Crying out for justice, giving all you have:
Hail and Hosanna, young, growing God!*

*Great, living God, never fully known,
Joyful darkness far beyond our seeing,
Closer yet than breathing, everlasting home:
Hail and Hosanna, great, living God!*

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

P: Let us pray...

C: Amen.

God's Word

God Stories

First Reading

Acts 7: 55-60

Celebrate pg. 1

Psalm Psalm 31:1-5,15-16 Choir & Cong. Celebrate pg. 1

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:2-10

Celebrate pg. 2

*Gospel Acclamation “Halle Halle”

Halle, Halle, Halle—lu –u –jah! (repeat twice)
Halle-lujah! Hal-le—lu-jah!

*Gospel Reading John 14:1-14 Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Holy Gospel acc. to St. John, the 10th chapter.

C: Glory to you, O God

(The Gospel is read)

P: The Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Message

Pastor James P. Lapp

*Hymn of the Day

“I Received the Living God” Red #477

REFRAIN

I received the living God,
and my heart is full of joy.
I received the living God,
and my heart is full of joy.

1. Jesus said: I am the bread
kneaded long to give you life;
you who will partake of me
need not ever fear to die.

REFRAIN

2. Jesus said: I am the way,
and my Father longs for you;
so I come to bring you home
to be one with us a~new.

REFRAIN

3. Jesus said: I am the truth;
if you follow close to me,
you will know me in your heart,
and my word shall make you free. REFRAIN

4. Jesus said: I am the life
far from whom no thing can grow,
but receive this living bread,
and my Spirit you shall know. REFRAIN

An Affirmation of Faith

I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
It sounds like welcome, and feels like home.
It sounds like laughter, and feels like mercy.
It sounds like love, and feels like a seat at the table,
so I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
I have seen it alive in the world.
And even when my heart aches, even when wars rage,
even when mercy feels out of reach,
I remember the one who welcomed the children
and led with nonviolence.
I remember the one who cared for the vulnerable
and inspired those around him.
I remember that the good news really is good news,
for I have seen it alive in the world.
Thanks be to God! Amen.

*The Prayers of the Church

Celebrate, Page 4

* 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.
Please leave worship slip & offering in plates near you.

Music “Christ is Risen Shout Hosanna”
 Thomas Pavlechko, 1962

*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.**

Invitation to the table

On Easter morning, the women went looking for Jesus.
The angel said he was not in the tomb,
so they ran, afraid yet filled with joy. They sought after him.
They hurried to Galilee, looking for their risen Christ.
And in their seeking, the text tells us:
"Suddenly, Jesus met them" (Matthew 28:9).
Jesus met the women in their seeking.
Jesus met them in their moment of fear and grief.
Jesus met them when they felt lost.
Jesus met them and provided hope.
Friends, if like the women you are seeking Christ,
if you have known grief or fear,
if you have ever felt lost, or if you are in need of some hope,
then come to this Table. All are welcome here.
For just as Jesus met the women in their seeking,
I am confident that Jesus meets us here, saying, "Do not be afraid."

Great Thanksgiving

Risen Christ, good-news God, and ever-present Spirit,
Today is a day we've been waiting for, and now that we're here,
all we can say is thank you.

Thank you for showing the world what could be.
Thank you for loving us with abandon.
Thank you for facing death and returning with mercy.
And thank you for meeting us here, as you always do.
Today we celebrate the good news that you are alive in the world.
The grave couldn't hold you. Death couldn't keep you.
The empire couldn't confine you.
Instead, you are here and everywhere.
You are risen. You are on the move in the world.
Your love meets us at this table and calls us out into the world.
And that is *good, good news*.

May God be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to God.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*Eucharistic Prayer

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

*Words of Institution

*Lord's Prayer

P: God, remember us in Your Love and teach us to pray:

**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.**

Invitation to Communion

P: All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread.

Holy Communion

ALL, Yes — EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Communion is by intinction, we dip the bread (gluten-free) into either the wine (red) or grape juice (white).

Hymn “Jesus Remember Me” Red #616 (repeat often)

Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.

*Communion Blessing

May this Holy Communion of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us in God’s grace, now and forever.
Amen.

*Prayer After Communion

Loving Christ,
thank you for the bread that nourishes our bodies.
Thank you for the cup that quenches our thirst.
Thank you for this community,
which reminds us who we are.
Thank you for this Table that brings us together.
Thank you for the music that lifts our spirits.
Thank you for the promise that at this Table,
and every table, you will be there.
May this holy meal nourish us to go out into the world
speaking of your good, good news.
With joy and hope we pray, **Amen.**

The Sending

*Blessing

May God bless you and keep you.
May God's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
May God look upon you with favor,
And give you peace.
Amen.

*Closing Hymn *"Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!"* Red # 377

**Alleluia! Jesus is risen!
Trumpets resounding in glorious light!
Splendor, the Lamb, heaven forever!
Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!**

REFRAIN

**Jesus is risen and we shall arise.
Give God the glory! Alleluia!**

**Walking the way, Christ in the center
Telling the story to open our eyes;
Breaking our bread, giving us glory:
Jesus our blessing, our constant surprise. *REFRAIN***

**Jesus the vine, we are the branches;
Life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree;
Heaven to earth, Christ to the people,
Gift of the future now flowing to me. *REFRAIN***

**Weeping, be gone; sorrow, be silent;
Death put asunder, and Easter is bright.
Cherubim sing: O grave, be open!
Clothe us in wonder, adorn us in light. *REFRAIN***

City of God, Easter forever,
Golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb,
River of life, saints and archangels,
Sing with creation to God the I AM!

REFRAIN

*Dismissal

P: Alleluia! Christ Is Risen!

C: Christ Is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

P: Go in Peace. Share the Good News.

C: Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Postlude "And the Glory of the Lord"
chorus, from the Messiah G. F. Handel

Serving Today

Altar Guild—Candace Anderson

Reader—Elke Spires

Coffee Host —Rebecca Wickham

Office support—Candace A., Sheila B. & Sherilyn J.



Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM *Bob Zigler, Alfrad family, Ratliff family, Kathybelle, Taiyo, Sam, Nancy's Family, Kat, Penny, Kathy Freeman, Family of Pr. Herb Schmidt, Kathybelle & family, Colin, Family of Marc Northcott, Camryn, Corbin, Family of Marilyn, Dorothy Ronning, Bob Holzwarth, Mary Robe & Family, Renee, Family of Laura Gates, Sina & Bella, Chad Fields, Beth Stiles, Laura & twin babies, James, Don, Pr. Gary & Corinne Stevenson, Kevin, Liz, Sam, Tom Williams, Kathy M., Nancy, Grey, Levi, James, Galahad, Debbie, Sam, Nate Barker, Robbin, Middle East Peace, Tom Dawson, Dustin, Father Jack Davis, Adolfo, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Allen, Gary & Marjie Toops, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Isaac & Marissa, Mateo & Lina, Atlas, Katarina.*

LONG TERM *Those suffering with Mental Illness, James Sheehan, Biergiel—Colclough family, Eric Utto-Galarneau, Beth UG, Brian Utto, Kathy Brooks, Joel Hurtgamm, Dawit & family (Ethiopia), Miller, April, Aaron Johnson, Shelby, Ashley, Frank, Joe, Lisa & Beau, Linda Johnson, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, 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.*



Mt. Cross Memorial Day Volunteer Event

Saturday, May 23

Come for all day or partial day. Plenty of jobs for all skill levels. Fellowship with cool people. End with community celebration BBQ & Bingo!

They need a head count, so register now
See www.mtcross.org *Events*
You may be amused by the photo used

Other Giving Options

We are now able to receive donations made by:
credit card, debit card, PayPal, Venmo & Zelle.

There are three choices:

- 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>



Upcoming Events:

May Benevolence Offering = Mt. Cross
Lutheran Outdoor Ministry

- May 5 Scouts 6:00 pm
- May 8 Bible Study 7:30 pm
- May 7 Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm
- May 8 A. A. Group 7:00 pm
- May 7 & 23 Women's Bold Café 6:00 pm
devotions and potluck
- May 9 Embroiders Guild 9—4:00 pm
- May 16 AFC Annual Gala 6:00—8:30 pm Holy Cross
info@afcsantacruz.org
- May 17 Meet Pastor Larry our sabbatical Pastor
- Reception
- New member Sunday
- Bless Children's Bibles
- May 20 TAIZE Worship 7:00 pm
- May 21—August 24 Pastor Jim on sabbatical
- May 23 Mt. Cross Memorial Day Volunteer Event
- May 30 AFC Shelter Dinner. We are committed to the
5th Saturday of each month. **Please sign up to help**
serve the meal, and/or provide main course, or salad. St.
John's, Aptos 6 pm. We are all worthy of dignity & connection.
- June 7 SAVE THE DATE
Meet the Mt. Cross Summer Staff & BBQ

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 Statement

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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Ministers: The People of St. Stephen's
Pastor: Rev. James P. Lapp
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp
Music Directors: Gary Roberts
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens
Custodian: John Hopping

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Prayer by Rev. Srah A. Speed / A Sanctified Art LLC