

Receive the Holy Spirit

JOHN 20:22



Sunday, May 24, 2026—10am

Welcome, family of faith! On this Pentecost Sunday, we are joining Christians all around the world to celebrate the formation of the church when the Holy Spirit called people into community as Christ's body and blessed them with universal understanding of languages.

Some theologians describe Pentecost as the Church's birthday. Others describe it as a "big bang" that brought the Church into being, for just as God's Spirit came rushing into the world over the waters of creation, in the very beginning of Acts, God's Spirit rushes into the world to gather and transform God's people.

So where does that leave us? If we are willing to be amazed, Pentecost is one of the most awe-inspiring days in our Christian calendar. If we are willing to be transformed, it is an opportunity to be renewed in energy and faithfulness toward the work of God's kingdom on earth when all people will experience true liberation and boundless love.

So may we be willing to be amazed. May we be open to being transformed. Let us worship God together. Please rise in body or in spirit to join me in the call to worship.

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.

(* means to please stand in body or spirit)

Gathering

Prelude "Come Holy Spirit" John Anders

*Call to Worship

As we gather together in this place,
let us strain our ears to hear the rush of wind,
the crackle pop of fire.

We listen for your call, God of spirit and flame.

We take our place in your unfolding creation.

Rejoice, for God's spirit flows among us!

Rejoice, for today the church embraces transformation.

**In the midst of rebirth, we join our voices in praise!
Let us worship God!**

***Invitation to Confession**

Through confession, we have the opportunity to turn our bodies to God and, as one body, name the actions and inactions that separate us from God and one another. Let us lift our hearts and voices together in prayer.

***Prayer of Confession**

**God, you invite us to wonder.
We confess that we find more comfort in the mundane.
We lean into the familiar and treat the amazing
as suspicious or even threatening.
We long for a routine to keep us safe from pain,
and we're willing to give up joy in exchange.
Reshape our hearts for possibility, O God.
Awaken our senses to your wondrous work in the world,
and give us the courage and will to follow you.**

***Assurance of Grace**

From Psalm 104, verses 24, 28, and 30. The psalmist writes,

“O LORD, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
When you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the earth.”

**It is through this same creative,
renewing Spirit that we experience God's grace.
We give thanks as a renewed, forgiven people!**

God is here! As we your people
meet to offer praise and prayer,
May we find in fuller measure
what it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us,
all our varied skills and arts
wait the coming of the Spirit
Into open minds and hearts.

Here are symbols to remind us
Of our life long need of grace;
Here are table, font, and pulpit;
Here the cross has central place.
Here in honesty of preaching,
Here in silence, as in speech,
Here, in newness and renewal,
God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome
in the Shepherd's flock and fold;
Here as bread and wine are taken,
Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant
Seek in worship to explore
What it means in daily living
To believe and to adore.

Lord of all, of church and kingdom,
In an age of change and doubt,
Keep us faithful to the gospel;
Help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication,
All we have to give, receive;
We, who cannot live without you,
We adore you! We believe!

*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.

*Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray: (Celebrate pg. 1)

C: Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Friends, please join me in a meditative prayer for illumination.

I invite you to bow your head and open your non-dominant hand, palm side up. With your finger, trace the shape of the wind on your palm in honor of the way the Spirit can move in us. (pause for silence)

Now, trace a flame on your palm, remembering how God can show up in mysterious ways, remembering how the presence of God warms and purifies us. (pause for silence)

Now, clasp your hands, lacing your fingers together, remembering the way in which scripture calls us into unity with one another.

With clear minds and focused hearts, may we hear the God stories and the words of scripture today and be receptive to the way in which God speaks to us through this good word.

In God's holy name we pray, **Amen.**

Word

God Stories—How has God's Word come alive in your life?

First Reading

Acts 2:1-21

Celebrate pg. 1

Psalm Psalm 104:24-34 Choir & Cong. Celebrate pg. 1

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 12:3-13 Celebrate pg. 3

*Gospel Acclamation "Halle Halle"

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

*Gospel Reading John 20:19-23 Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Holy Gospel acc. to St. John, the 20th 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 Larry Vilardo

*Hymn of the Day "O Day Full of Grace" Red #627

1. O day full of grace that now we
see appearing on earth's horizon,
Bring light from our God that we may be
abundant in joy this season.

God, shine for us now in this dark place;
Your name on our hearts emblazon.

2. O day full of grace, O blessed time,
our Lord on the earth arriving;
Then came to the world that light sublime,
great joy for us all retrieving;
For Jesus all mortals did embrace,
all shame and despair removing.

3. For Christ bore our sins, and not his
Own, when he on the cross was hanging;
And then he arose and moved the stone,
That we, unto him belonging,
Might join with angelic hosts to raise
our voices in endless singing.

4. God came to us then at Pentecost,
The Spirit new life revealing,
And we might no more in death be lost,
Its pow'r over us dispelling.
This flame will the mark of sin efface
And bring to us all true healing.

5. When we on that final journey go
That Christ is for us preparing,
We'll gather in song, our hearts aglow,
All joy of the heavens sharing,
And there we will join God's endless praise,
With angels and saints adoring.

*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.**

P: On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit enabled
people from different nations and languages
to not only speak to one another,
but to understand each other.

Friends, in many ways, celebrating Pentecost
Is celebrating God's ability to forge connection
and peace among diverse people and nations.
As renewed, forgiven people, let us share the unifying
peace of God with one another now, saying:
"The peace of Christ be with you."

Invitation to the Offering

Let us contemplate our gifts and offerings
as we read a poem titled, “A Blessing for the Seekers,”
by the Reverend Sarah Speed:

**Blessed are you who turn your face up to the sky,
who open your arms to feel the wind,
who notice all the things that we should notice.
Blessed are you who are fluent in wonder
and familiar with awe.
Blessed are you who, even now, dream dreams,
who have not lost hope,
who swear the glass is still half-full.
Blessed are you who plant trees and sing the harmony,
who tell the children how this world can be magic.
Blessed are you who walk and seek
and turn over every stone,
pointing out all the corners and colors that God lives in.
Blessed are you.
Trusting in our blessedness, let us give generously.**

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 Anthem “Every Time I Feel the Spirit”

*Offering Prayer

P: God of goodness and growth,

C: **All creation is yours.**

Water and word, wine and bread:

These are signs of our abundant grace.

Nourish us through these gifts,

That we might proclaim your steadfast love

In our communities and in the world,

Through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song.

Amen.

Meal

Invitation to the Table

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit flung the invitation far and wide to participate fully in the body of Christ.

Following her example,
we set this Table as a place without limits,
Without entrance requirements, or any type of exclusion.
The invitation already has your name on it.
Come, all who wish to take part in the joyful feast.

Great Thanksgiving

God, who is the maker of all things,
we give you thanks as we celebrate the day
when you brought together the multitudes to worship you
and to place their hope in Jesus Christ.

We thank you for the countless possibilities for
awe, wonder, and amazement
that we experience as your people.

We celebrate this day and remember your still unfolding work
to bring together people of all
tongues, nations, races, genders, sexualities, abilities,
and economic circumstances into the work of
re-forming the world for your glory
and for the good of all people.

We thank you for the blessing of this holy meal
as you impart grace upon us,
a grace that we are still learning to understand.

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, that we should at all times and in all places, offer thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. Fulfilling the promise of the resurrection, you pour out your Holy Spirit, uniting in one body, people of every tongue and nation.

*Words of Institution

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.”
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.”

*Lord's Prayer

P: Great Creator Spirit, equip us for a world where all people experience connection, belonging, safety, and well-being. Help us become those who make such a world not just possible, but present. With hope, we join our voices with the voices of countless generations, languages, and communities as we pray the words Jesus taught us. 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 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: Friends of Jesus, come to Christ's table.
Receive nourishment for the journey.

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).

Communion Hymn

“Bread of Life from Heaven” Red #474

REFRAIN

**Bread of life from heaven,
your blood and body given,
We eat this bread and drink this cup
until you come again.**

**Break now the bread of Christ's sacrifice;
Giving thanks, hungry ones, gather round.
Eat, all of you, and be satisfied;
In Christ's presence the loaves will abound. REFRAIN**

(hymn continued)

Seek not the food that will pass away;
Set your hearts on the food that endures.
Come, learn the true and the living way,
That the fullness of life may be yours. **REFRAIN**

Love as the one who, in love for you,
Gave himself for the life of the world.
Come to the one who is food for you,
That your hunger and thirst be no more. **REFRAIN**

Dwell in the one who now dwells in you;
Make your home in the life giving Word.
Know only Christ, Holy One of God,
And believe in the truth you have heard. **REFRAIN**

Drink of this cup and declare his death;
Eat this bread and believe Easter morn;
Trust his return and, with ev'ry breath,
Praise the one in whom you are re-born. **REFRAIN**

*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

God of the welcome table,
In this meal we have feasted on your goodness
And have been united by your presence among us.
Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts
So that we may share your neighborly love with all,
Through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life.
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

"May the God of Hope go with Us" Blue #984

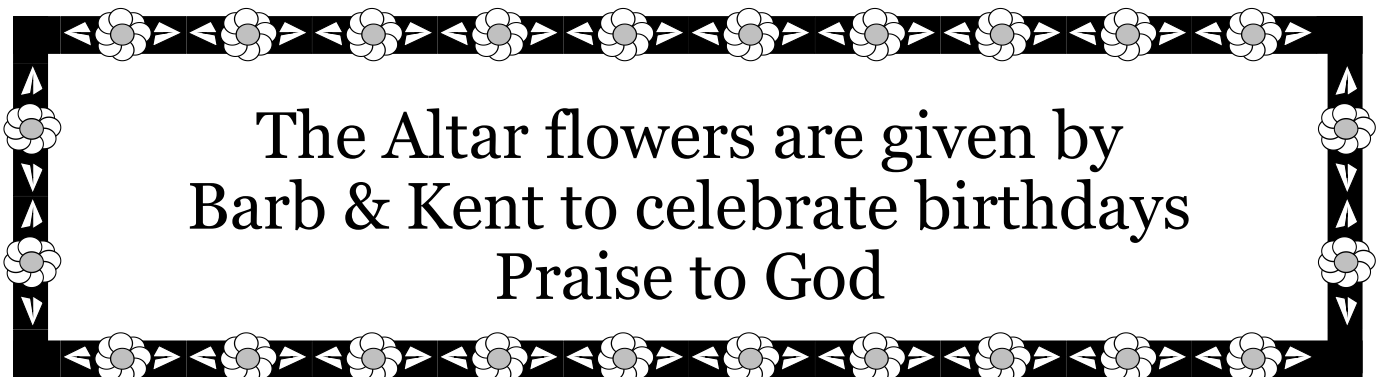
May the God of hope go with us ev'ry day,
To a world in need with news of joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,
Bringing light and hope to ev'ry land and race.
Praying, let us work for peace;
Singing, share our joy with all;
Working on a world that's new,
Faithful when we hear Christ's call.

*Dismissal

P: Go in Peace. Share the Good News.
C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

"O Spirit All Embracing" Gustav Holst 1874-1934



Serving Today

Altar Guild— Tina Gates

Reader— Beth Stiles

Coffee Host — Rosie & Don

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.*

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 26 Scouts 6:00 pm
- May 27 Newsletter Collating 2:00 pm
- May 27 Bible Study 7:30 pm Zoom
- May 28 Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm
- May 29 A. A. Group 7:00 pm
- May 30 AFC Shelter Dinner. We are committed to the
5th Saturday of each month. St. John's, Aptos 6 pm.
We are all worthy of dignity & connection.
- June 2 Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm
Discretion Brewery 41st Ave.
Faith Questions genuine community
- June 4 & 18 Women's Bold Café 6:00 pm
devotions and potluck
- June 7 Meet the Mt. Cross Summer Staff
& Summer kick off BBQ
Set up & clean up needed!!!
- June 13 Embroiders Guild 9—4:00 pm
- June 21 & 28 Sign up for Altar Flowers
- Now through August 24 Pastor Jim on sabbatical

Pastor's Office Hours Wednesdays 10 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 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

Music used by permission Onelicense #A-706539
Prayer by Rev. Srah A. Speed / A Sanctified Art LLC

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.*