



*You are of more value
than many sparrows*

MATTHEW 10:31

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost June 21, 2026—10am

Prelude “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come”

Luther wrote and Bach later arranged into larger works

Welcome, family of faith! During this Pentecost Season, 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

*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 Psalm 104, vs 24, 28 & 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!**

*Opening Hymn *"Faith of Our Fathers"*

Red #812

Faith of our fathers, living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword.
Oh, how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene'er we hear that glorious word.

REFRAIN

Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
We will be true to you till death.

The martyrs, chained in prisons dark,
were still in heart and conscience free;
And blest would be their childrens' fate
if they, like them, should die for thee. **REFRAIN**

Faith of our fathers! We will love
both friend and foe in all our strife;
Proclaim thee too, as love knows how,
by saving word and faithful life.

REFRAIN

*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 Jeremiah 20:7-13 Celebrate pg. 1

Psalm Psalm 69:7-10 reader Celebrate pg. 1

Second Reading Romans 6:1-11 Celebrate pg. 3

*Gospel Acclamation "Halle Halle"

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

*Gospel Reading Matthew 10:24-39 Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Holy Gospel acc. to St. Matthew, the 10 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 Vilaro

*Hymn of the Day

“God of Grace and God of Glory” Red #705

God of grace and God of glory,
On your people pour your pow’r;
Crown your ancient church’s story;
Bring its bud to glorious flow’r.
Grant us wisdom grant us courage
For the facing of this hour,
For the facing of this hour.

Lo! The hosts of evil round us
Scorn the Christ assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to Faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
For the living of these days,
For the living of these days.

Cure your children’s warring madness;
bend our pride to your control;
Shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
Rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
lest we miss your kingdom’s goal,
lest we miss your kingdom’s goal.

Save us from weak resignation
To the evils we deplore;

Let the gift of your salvation
Be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
Serving you whom we adore,
Serving you whom we adore.

*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.**

(continued)

**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 “O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright”
Philipp Nicolai, original German hymn—Catherine in 1597
translated into the well known English version.

*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, al-
mighty 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

“All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly” #461

All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly;
Holy Manna Is Our Bread.
Come From Wilderness And Wand’ring.
Here In Truth, We Will Be Fed.
You That Yearn For Days Of Fullness,
All Around Us Is Our Food.
Taste And See The Grace Eternal,
Taste And See That God Is Good.

All Who Hunger, Never Strangers,
Seeker, Be A Welcome Guest.
Come From Restlessness And Roaming.
Here In Joy We Keep The Feast.
We That Once Were Lost And Scattered,
In Communion’s Love Have Stood.
Taste And See The Grace Eternal.
Taste And See That God Is Good

All Who Hunger, Sing Together;
Jesus Christ Is Living Bread.
Come From Loneliness And Longing.
Here In Peace, We Have Been Led.
Blest Are Those Who From This Table
Live Their Lives In Gratitude.
Taste And See The Grace Eternal.
Taste And See That God Is Good.

***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** *“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”* Red #632

O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home:

Under the shadow of your throne
your saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is your arm alone,
and our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood
or earth received its frame,
From ever lasting you are God,
to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in your sight
are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever rolling stream,
Bears all our years away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the op'ning day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Still be our guard while troubles last
and our eternal home.

*Dismissal

P: Go in Peace. Share the Good News.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude “Christ is Arised” the anonymous song,
dates back to around 1100, the oldest surviving
liturgical song in the German Language

Serving Today

Altar Guild— Tina Gates

Reader— Steven Hendrickson

Coffee Host —

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

Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM *Rev. Will & Dorothy Sieburg, Pam Huypner, Bob Zaun, Bob Zigler, Alfrad family, Ratliff family, Kathybelle, Taiyo, Sam, Nancy's Family, Kat, Penny, Kathy Freeman, Family of Pr. Herb Schmidt, Colin, Camryn, Family of Marilyn, Dorothy Ronning, Bob Holzwarth, Mary Robe & Family, Renee, Sina & Bella, Chad Fields, James, Don, Pr. Gary & Corinne Stevenson, Kevin, Liz, Sam, 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 Pal-*

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:

June Benevolence Offering =
Society for the Prevention of Suicide

- June 22 CDC Board 11:15 am
- June 22 Newsletter Deadline NOON
Your Faith Journey / God Stories welcome
- June 23 Scouts 6:00 pm
- June 24 Bible Study Zoon 7:30 pm
- June 25 Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm
- June 26 A. A. Group 7:00 pm
- June 28 Guest musician Johnathan Bliss (organist)
- June 29 NL Collating 10:30 am
- July 2 & 16 Women's Bold Café 6:00pm
devotions and potluck
- July 7 Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm
Discretion Brewery 41st Ave.
Faith Questions genuine community
- July / August Sign up for Altar Flowers

Pr. Larry will have brief office hours Tues. & Weds. Afternoons

Now through August 24 Pastor Jim on sabbatical

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.

2500 Soquel Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
831/476-4700 FAX 831/476-3918
email: office@ststephenslutheran.org
Web Address: www.ststephenslutheran.org
Office Hours: Mon.—Fri. 12-5:00 pm

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

estine/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.