

**WHOEVER
WELCOMES
YOU
WELCOMES
ME**

MATTHEW 10:40



Fifth Sunday after Pentecost June 28, 2026—10am

Prelude

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

“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: 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 28:5-9 Celebrate pg. 1

Psalm Psalm 89:1-4, 5-18 reader Celebrate pg. 1

Second Reading Romans 6:12-23 Celebrate pg. 3

*Gospel Acclamation “Halle Halle”

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

*Gospel Reading Matthew 10:40-42 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 “Children of the heavenly Father” Red #781

Children of the heavenly Father
Safely in his bosom gather
Nestling bird or star in heaven
Such a refuge ne'er was given

God his own doth tend and nourish
In his holy courts they flourish
From all evil things he spares them
In his mighty arms he bears them

Neither life nor death shall ever
From the Lord his children sever
Unto them his grace he showeth

And their sorrows all he knoweth

Though he giveth or he taketh
God his children ne'er forsaketh
His the loving purpose solely
To preserve them pure and holy

*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

*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:

(continued)

“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 “Eat This Bread“ Red #472

**Eat this bread, drink this cup,
come to me and never be hungry.**

**Eat this bread, drink this cup,
trust in me and you will not thirst.**

*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 “On Our Way Rejoicing” Red #537

On our way rejoicing gladly let us go.
Christ our Lord has conquered; vanquished is the foe.
Christ without, our safety; Christ within, our joy;
Who, if we be faithful, can our hope destroy?

REFRAIN

On our way rejoicing; as we forward move,
hearken to our praises, O blest God of love!

Unto God the Father joyful songs we sing;
Unto God the Savior thankful hearts we bring;
Unto God the Spirit bow we and adore,
On our way rejoicing now and ever more. **REFRAIN**

*Dismissal

P: Go in Peace. Share the Good News.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Serving Today

Altar Guild — Conie Cunningham

Reader— Beth Stiles

Coffee Host — Connie Cunningham

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



The Altar flowers are given by
Connie Cunningham
For the World

Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM *Alfrad families, Haley Jones Family, Chris Laughlin, Lisa, Lorraine, Rev. Will & Dorothy Sieburg, Pam Huypner, Karin Zaun & family, Bob Zigler, 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, 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 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.*

God uses money to confirm direction.

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.” (Prov. 3:5-6).*

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

- Today Guest musician Johnathan Bliss
- June 29 NL Collating 10:30 am
- June 30 Scouts 6:00 pm
- July 1 Bible Study Zoon 7:30 pm
- July 2 Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm
- July 3 A. A. Group 7:00 pm
- July 7 Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm
Discretion Brewry 41st Ave.
Faith Questions genuine community
- July 14 Church Council 6:30 pm
- July 16 Women's Bold Café 6:00pm
devotions and potluck
- July / August Sign up for Altar Flowers & Coffee Host
- Aug. 29 AFC Shelter Dinner. We are committed to the
rare 5th Saturday of the month. St. John's, Aptos 6 pm.
We are all worthy of dignity & connection. Plan ahead
and Sign up now!

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.

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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