

*I will give you rest*

MATTHEW 11:28

## **Sixth Sunday after Pentecost July 5, 2026—10am**

Prelude “Fanfare” Richard Purvis  
6/25/1913 to 12/25/1995

*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      *“Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!” Red #873*

**1 Rejoice, ye pure in heart,  
rejoice, give thanks, and sing;  
your festal banner wave on high,  
the cross of Christ your King.**

**Refrain:**

**Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks, and sing!**

**2 With voice as full and strong  
As ocean’s surging praise,  
Send forth the sturdy hymns of old,  
The psalms of ancient days.      [Refrain]**

**3 With all the angel choirs,  
With all the saints on earth  
Pour out the strains of joy and bliss,  
True rapture, noblest mirth.      [Refrain]**

**4 Still lift your standard high,  
Still march in firm array,  
As pilgrims through the darkness wend  
Till dawns the golden day.      [Refrain]**

**5 At last the march shall end;  
The wearied ones shall rest;  
The pilgrims find their home at last,  
Jerusalem the blest.      [Refrain]**

**6 Praise God, who reigns on high,  
the Lord whom we adore:  
the Father, Son, and Spirit blest,  
one God forevermore.      [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                      Zechariah 9:9-12                      Celebrate pg. 1

Psalm                      Psalm 145:8-14                      reader                      Celebrate pg. 1

Second Reading                      Romans 7:15-25                      Celebrate pg. 3

\*Gospel Acclamation “Halle Halle”

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

\*Gospel Reading Matthew 11:16-30 Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Holy Gospel acc. to St. Matthew, the 16 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 “Beautiful Savior” Red #838

Beautiful Savior, King of creation,  
Son of God and Son of Man!  
Truly I’d love thee, truly I’d serve thee,  
Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

Fair are the meadows, fair are the woodlands,  
Robed in flow’rs of blooming spring;  
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,  
He makes our sorrowing spirit sing.

Fair is the sunshine, fair is the moonlight,  
Bright the sparkling stars on high;  
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer  
Than all the angels in the sky.

Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations,  
Son of God and Son of Man!  
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,  
Now and forevermore be thine!

\* 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 “Come Unto Me I Will Give You Rest”  
Excerpt Passage G.F. Handel

\*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

*"I Come with Joy" Red #482*

I come with joy, a child of God,  
Forgiven, loved, and free,  
The life of Jesus to recall in love  
Laid down for me, in love laid down for me.

I come with Christians far and near  
to find, as all are fed,  
The new community of love  
in Christ's communion bread, in Christ's communion  
bread.

As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share,  
Each proud division ends,  
The love that made us, makes us one,  
and strangers now are friends, and strangers now are  
friends.

The Spirit of the risen Christ,  
unseen, but ever near,  
Is in such friendship better known,  
alive among us here, alive among us here.

Together met, together bound  
by all that God has done,  
We'll go with joy, to give the world  
the love that makes us one, the love that makes us one.

## \*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 "Eternal Father, Strong to Save" Red #756

Eternal Father, strong to save,  
Whose arm was bound the restless wave,  
Who bade the mighty ocean deep  
Its own appointed limits keep;  
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,  
For those in peril on the sea!

O Savior, whose almighty word the winds and  
waves submissive heard,  
Who walked upon the foaming deep,  
And calm amid the storm didst sleep;  
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,  
For those in peril on the sea!

O Holy Spirit, who didst brood  
Upon the chaos dark and rude,  
And bid its angry tumult cease,  
And give, for wild confusion, peace;  
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,  
For those in peril on the sea!

O Trinity of love and pow'r,  
All trav'lers guard in danger's hour  
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,  
Protect them where soe'er they go;  
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee  
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

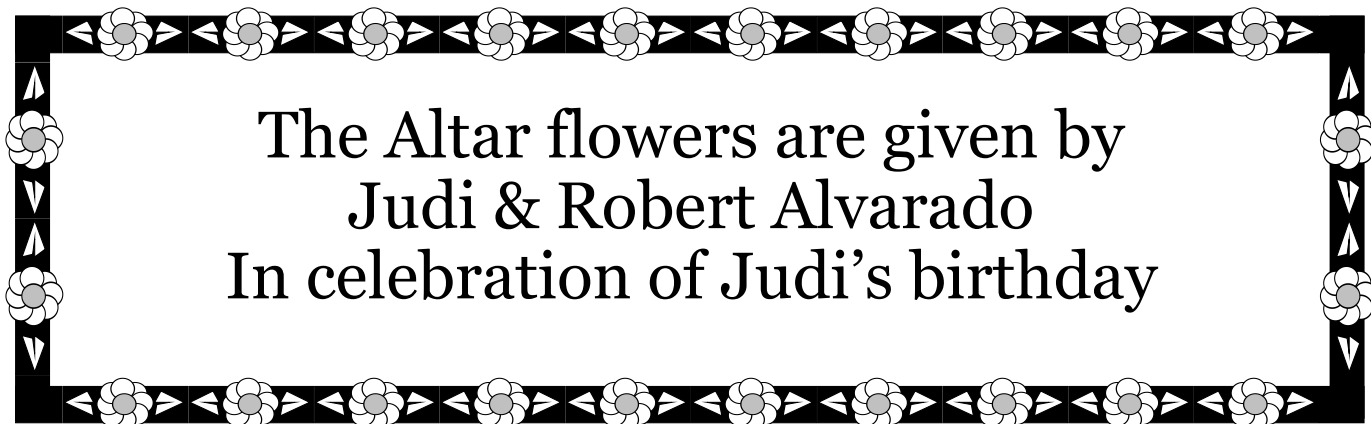
\*Dismissal

P: Go in Peace. Share the Good News.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

Postlude "She's a Grand Ol' Flag" George Cohan, 1906

Please give to the musicians fund



## Serving Today

Altar Guild — Connie Cunningham  
Reader— Elke Spires  
Coffee Host — Rebecca Wickham  
Office support—Candace A., Sheila B. & Sherilyn J.

## Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM Fred, Sioux Antonella, Jan Dun, Jame Price, Peggy Reed, 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, Jeanie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Allen, Gary & Marjie Toops, Rachel B.,

## 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:

July Benevolence Offering = ELCA World Hunger

- July 7            Scouts 6:00 pm
- July 8            Bible Study Zoon 7:30 pm
- July 9            Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm
- July 10           A. A. Group 7:00 pm
- July 11           Embroiders Guild 10—4 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 17           Newsletter Deadline Noon
- July 30           NL Collating 10:30 am Help needed
- 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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Web Address: [www.ststephenslutheran.org](http://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



## Music at St. Stephens

Happy 4th of July to all! My planning for the church music program begins this week. My vision is to enlarge leadership areas for the following — calling on members to help out:

1. Design a professional letter to local high-schools, that our music department needs the following instruments for worship at various times of the year (Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas & Easter) during worship. This would be a paid position per player—brass, strings, woods, percussionist.
2. Form the letter with church center head in an easy format for community presentation, and mailing. This would be extremely helpful. ? Interested ?
3. For long range planning this leadership will be essential and fun — I'll help! Looking for others to step forward for choir, pre-recorded music background, ordering, etc.

Yours in Christ and Mission,  
Gary



**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING  
THIS MINISTRY OF ST. STEPHENS!**

