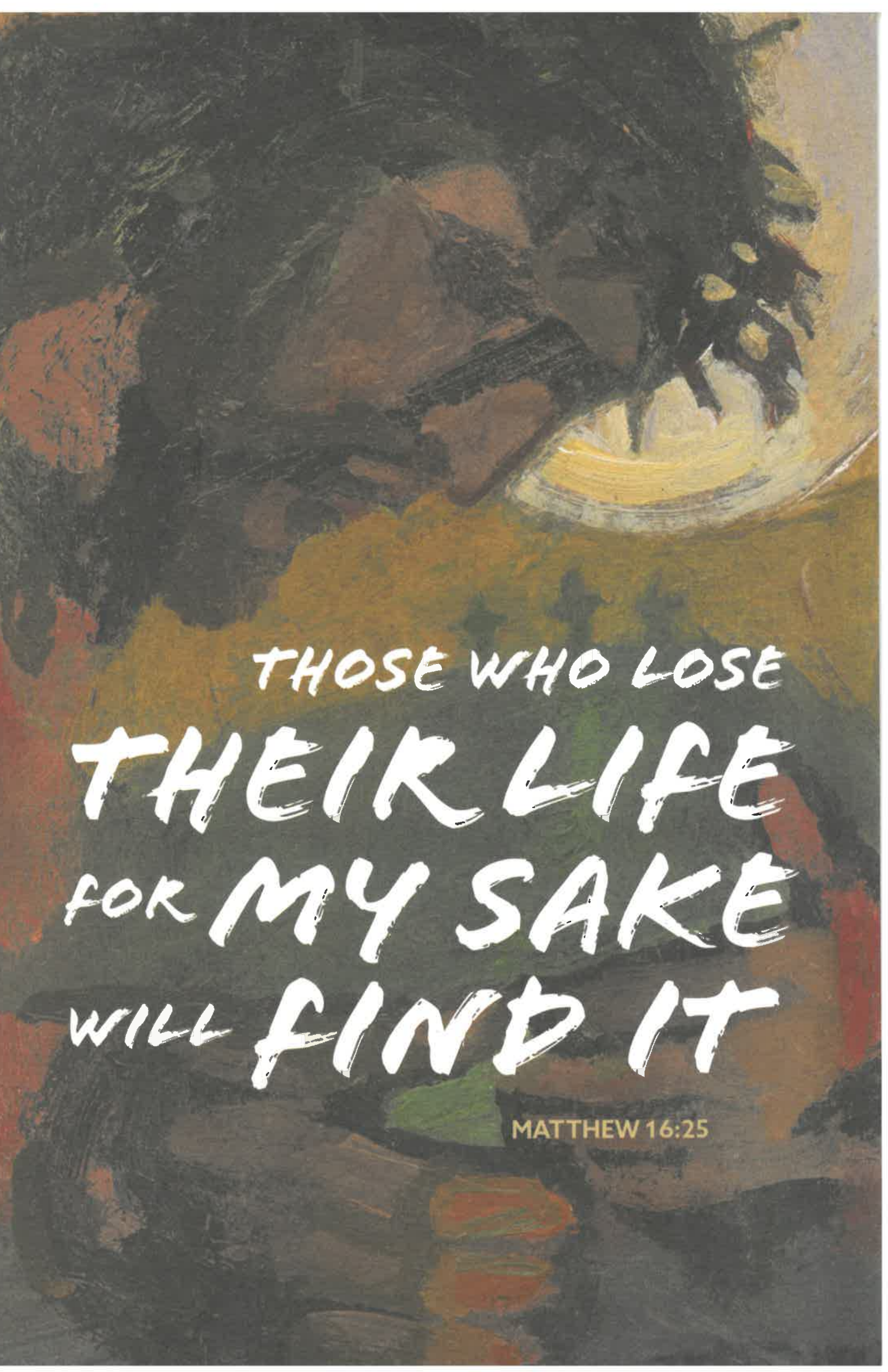




THOSE WHO LOSE
THEIR LIFE
FOR MY SAKE
WILL FIND IT

MATTHEW 16:25

13th Sunday after Pentecost

August 23, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Music

Johnathan Bliss guest musician

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

Please fill out the “Worship Slip” and place it in the offering plate.

(*) Asterisk means, “Please stand as you are able.”

The Gathering

*Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

C: Amen.

P: Seeking reconciliation with God and neighbor,
let us remember the gift of baptism and confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: God of mercy

**C: We confess that we have sinned against you,
Against one another,
And against the earth entrusted to our care.
We are worried and distracted by many things,
And we fail to love you above all else.
We store up treasures for ourselves
And turn away from our neighbors in need.
Forgive us,
that we may live in the freedom of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

P: When we were laid low by sin and the world's evil,
God made us alive together with Christ,
Forgiving us + all our trespasses
By taking the sin of the world to the cross.
For freedom Christ has set us free:
Rejoice in this good news!

C: Amen.

*Opening Hymn

"In Christ There Is No East or West" Red #650

In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North;
But one community of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.

In Christ shall true hearts ev'rywhere
Their high communion find;
His service is the golden cord,
Close binding humankind.

Join hands, disciples of the faith,
Whate'er your race may be.
All children of the living God
Are surely kin to me.

(hymn continued)

In Christ now meet both East and West,
In Him meet North and South;
All Christly souls are one in Him
Throughout the whole wide earth.

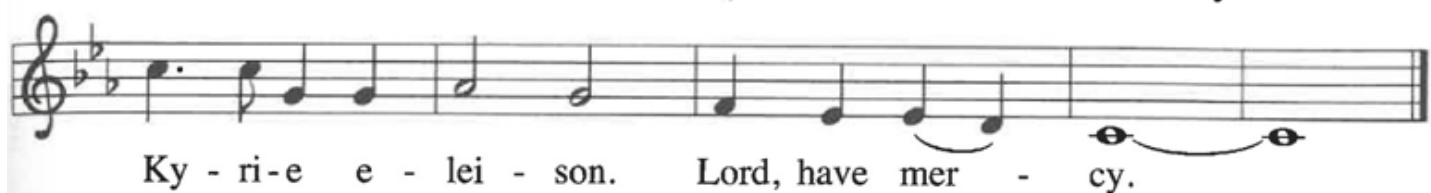
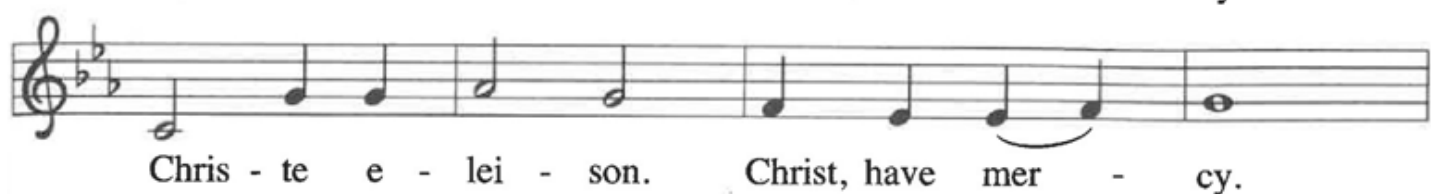
*Greeting

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

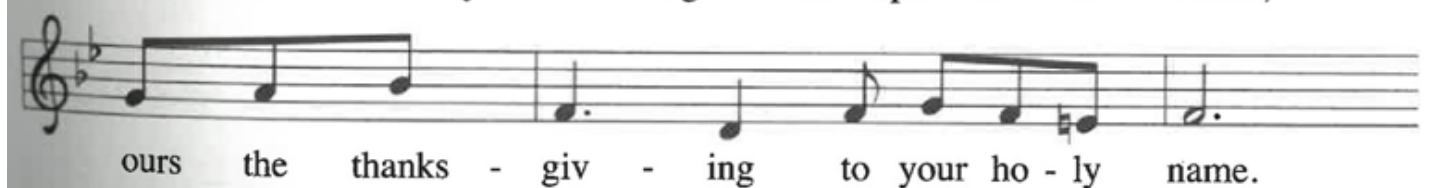
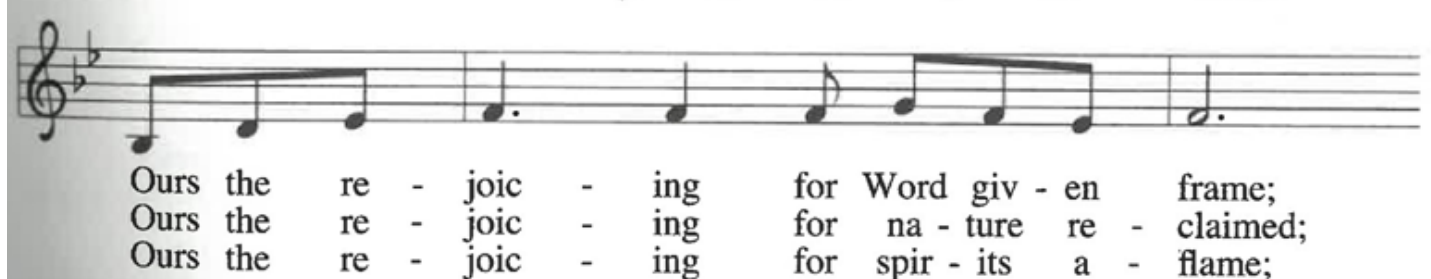
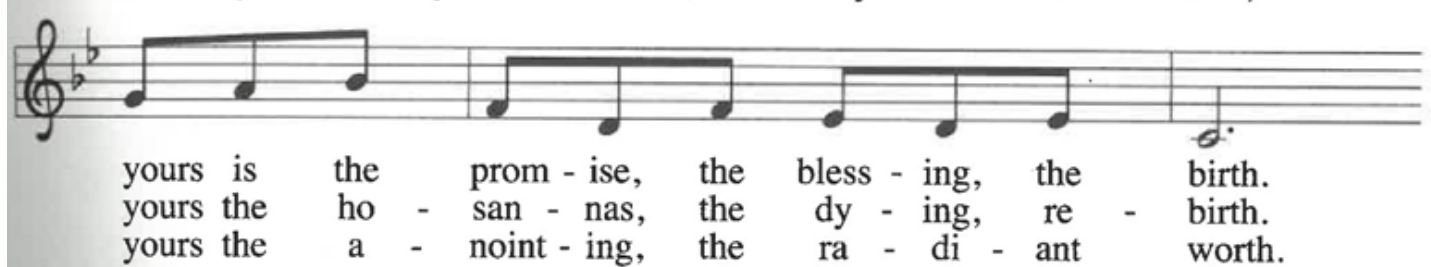
C: And also with you

*Kyrie & Hymn of Praise

Blue #31



One of the following or another song of praise may be sung.



*Prayer of the Day

The Word of God

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

First Reading

Isaiah 51:1-6

Celebrate pg. 1

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm

Psalm 138

(read responsively)

Cel. pg. 2

Second Reading

Romans 12:1-8

Celebrate pg. 3

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

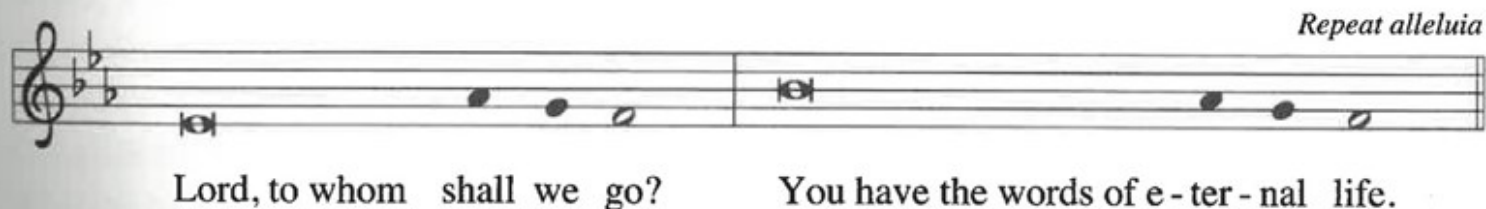
C: Thanks be to God.

*Gospel Acclamation

Blue #33



The proper verse may be sung, or all may sing one of these verses.



*Gospel Reading

Mathew 16:13-20

Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Holy Gospel acc. to St. Matthew, the 16th Chapter

C: Glory to you. O God.

(The Gospel is read)

P: This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

Message

Pr. Larry Vilardo

*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!

The Communion Meal

*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.

Music

Offering Prayer

P: Blessed are you, O God,
For the greening earth given for all,
For the talents we are given to share,
And for this bread and fruit of the vine.
Transform us to be the body of Christ,
That, feasting on this food and drink,
Our lives may reflect your generosity;
Through Christ our Lord,

C: Amen

*Great Thanksgiving

P: May God be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to God

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give God 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 by blood, shed for you

And for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.”

*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 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

P: God invites you to this table of bounty.
Come, the banquet is ready.

(Please be seated)

Communion Gathering Song



Communion Hymn

"Loaves Were Broken, Words Were Spoken" Blue #966

Loaves were broken, words were spoken
by the Galilean shore.
Jesus, Bread of life from heaven,
was their food forever more.

REFRAIN

By your body broken for us,
by your wine of life outpoured,
Jesus, feed again your people.
Be our Host, our Life, our Lord.

Loaves were broken, words were spoken
in a quiet room one night.
In the bread and wine you gave them,
Christ, you came as Light from Light.

REFRAIN

(hymn continued)

Loaves are broken, words are spoken,
as in faith we gather here.

Jesus speaks across the ages;
“I am with you; do not fear!”

REFRAIN

By the loaves you break and give us,
send us in your name to share
bread for which the millions hunger,
words that tell your love and care.

REFRAIN

The Sending

*Prayer after Communion

P: O God, in this Holy Communion
You have welcomed us into your presence,
Nourished us with words of mercy,
And fed us at your table.
Amid the cares of this life,
Strengthen us to love you with all our heart,
Serve our neighbors with a willing spirit,
And honor the earth you have made;
Through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

*Blessing

P: Live your lives in Christ,
rooted and built up in God's Spirit.
May you abound in thanksgiving;
And may the blessing of the holy Trinity, + one God,
Be upon you and remain with you forever.

C: Amen

*Closing Hymn

“Be Thou My Vision” Red #793

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
Thou my best thought both by day and by night,
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord,
Thou my soul’s shelter, and thou my high tow’r,
Raise thou me heav’nward, O Pow’r of my pow’r.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
Great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Light of my soul, after victory won,
May I reach heaven’s joys, O heaven’s Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

*Dismissal

P: Go in Peace, Christ is sending you.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Music

Serving Today

Reader: Bill Anderson

Coffee Host: Connie Cunningham

Altar Guild: Candace Anderson

Office Support: Sheila Buswell & Sherilyn Jager



Hope and Love in South Stockton - Mt. Cross Day Camp at Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina

Grace and peace be upon you all. At the new home of Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina, St. Mark's United Methodist Church in South Stockton, the staff of Mt. Cross, led by Seminarian Christa Wyneken García, brought hope and love to the children who attended the summer camp. Among these young campers, there were migrant children whose parents were taken into custody by ICE agents in a traffic stop.

The title of Camp was "Wear Love." The Mt Cross staff, showed the participants the meaning of God's love through games, Bible Studies, songs, prayers, arts and crafts and their kindness. We did not have many kids given the fact that many families are afraid of going out, because of the increase of ICE activity in the area, but also because many are working hours that do not allow them to send their kids and be able to pick them up. Other families leave to other states looking for work and return in late August. Nevertheless, this collaboration planted a seed of hope and love in one of the poorest ZIP codes in the state of California: 95206.

It is there in the margins that God awaits us all. Just like Christ was crucified outside the city as a marginalized peasant Jew by the Roman Empire, we are called to meet Christ at the foot of the crosses experienced by other marginalized communities. We find Christ in the means of grace, but we also find him among his little ones, in the margins. The seed has been planted. Amen.

New Ways of Giving

Our *Virtual Offering Plate* has been enhanced. Donations can be made by: credit card, debit card, PayPal, Venmo and Zelle.

- 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.

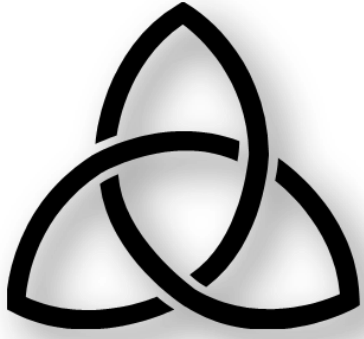
All are available at
<https://ststephenslutheran.org>
Or by scanning this QR code.



Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM *Mark Linder, Ross Johnston, Zelma Fennell & family, Eleara Sanchez, Jeffery, Zaun family, Doug Lentz, Celeste, Sharon, Kelly Sago, Ryan, June Raleigh Tony, Bunny, Richard Walton, Kayla Ratliff, Deontae Ratliff, Barbara Allen & Family, Jordan Perez, Fred, Rev. Will & Dorothy Sieburg, Pam Huypner, Bob Zigler, Kathybelle, Taiyo, Sam, Nancy's Family, Kat, Penny, Colin, Camryn, 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, Gary & Marjie Toops, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Isaac & Marissa, Mateo & Lina, Atlas, Katarina. Lorraine & Pr. Larry*

LONG TERM *James, 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., Those suffering with Mental Illness, Immigrant families, The Unhoused, People of Ukraine, People of Palestine/Israel, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, S.S. Senior Housing, Pastor Jim & Our Church Family, men*



Trinity Tuesday

(Pub Theology / Discussion)

One Beverage ~ One Hour ~ One Question

Tuesday September 1 at 6:30pm

First Tuesday of the month at Discretion Brewery

*BRING YOUR DEEPEST QUESTIONS,
AN OPEN HEART,
& A CURIOUS MIND*

Gather with us for an evening of meaningful conversation and real community. Bring your questions about faith, life, and everything in between. No judgment, no limits—just authentic dialogue over a cold one.

Whether you've been with us from the start or you're stepping through the door for the first time, there's a seat waiting for you.

Past conversations: How do we see God? How are we called? Why do bad things happen to good people? Recognizing our God-given talents. How do we forgive?

Kathy Allen 430-6359 for more info.



On ZOOM
with Pr. Larry

Check email on
Tues. for link

WEDNESDAYS

7:30 – 8:30 pm

We will be looking at the upcoming scripture readings for Sunday, to enrich our worship experience and uncover some of the deeper truths of our faith. As we grow in our faith, we grow in community.

Larry Vilardo <lvilardo@earthlink.net>

HOLY CLOSURE

Child Development Center

August 30



10 am

Worship

Join in this faithful process of our Preschool ending,
Grieve it's loss &
Affirm God's ongoing presence.

Music at St. Stephen's



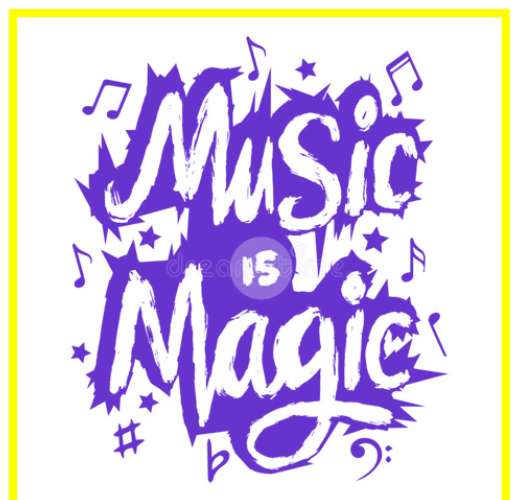
Happy Sunday Morning to everyone! The fall music program is almost here. I'm very glad and motivated to begin rehearsals, and have choir participating in worship once again in support of intoning the Psalms, readings, and the Gospel of our Lord.

Welcome Zelma Fennell as our new choir member, a fine voice and a spirited singer. Hurray! All are welcome!

By the way, last Sunday—Ladies you sounded fantastic! Wonderful singing together, and making music. Thanks guys also it was a real pleasure for me to accompany our congregational choir.

Thanks to the following: Rebecca Wickham & Mary Kelly for your leadership in forming our outreach letter to local schools and musicians—starting soon. Robert Alvarado for stepping forward and assisting in our new Web addition. Bill Schraft for choir communications, and doing such a great job of keeping us informed. Thank you Pastor Larry

Yours in Christ and Mission,
Gary



Upcoming Events:

August Benevolence Offering =
California Lutheran University &
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

TODAY Farewell Potluck for Pastor Larry
Stay—always pleant of food :

Aug. 25 Scouts 6:00 pm

Aug. 26 Bible Study Zoom 7:30 pm

Aug. 27 Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm

Aug. 28 A. A. Group 7:00 pm

Aug. 30 — September Coffee Hosts & readers needed !

Aug. 30 “Holy Closure” worship honoring our preschool
& Boy Scouts host coffee hour!!!

Sept. 1 Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm
Discretion Brewry 41st Ave.
Faith Questions genuine community

Sept. 3 & 17 Women's Bold Café 6:00pm
devotions and potluck

Sept 11-13 Women of ELCA Retreat

Sept 12 Embroider's Guild 10—4

Oct. 31 Host AFC Shelter Dinner St. John's, Aptos 6 p

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

*"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. Noon—5:00 pm

Ministers: The People of St. Stephen's
Pastor: Rev. James P. Lapp
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp
Music Director: Gary Roberts
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp
Custodian: John Hopping
Powerpoint: Jay Johnston, Kent Madsen & Barbara Rice

Music used by permission Onelicense #A-706539