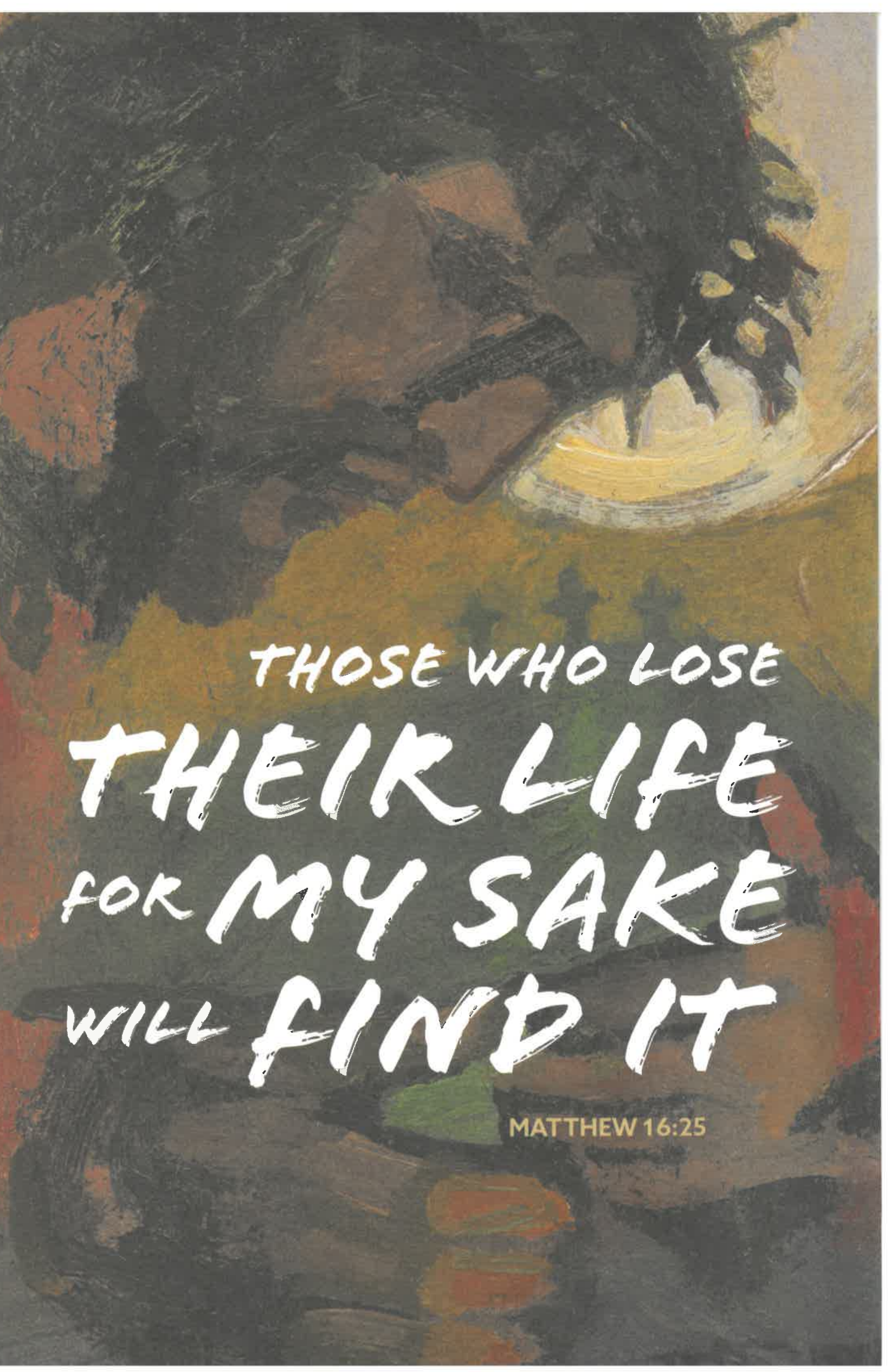




THOSE WHO LOSE
THEIR LIFE
FOR MY SAKE
WILL FIND IT

MATTHEW 16:25

14th Sunday after Pentecost

August 30, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Music

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 *"For the Beauty of the Earth"* Red #879

For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:

REFRAIN

Christ, our God, to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.

For the wonder of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flow'r,
Sun and moon and stars of light:

REFRAIN

(Hymn continued)

For the joy of ear and eye,
For the heart and mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony
Linking sense to sound and sight: REFRAIN

For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
For the friends on earth and friends above;
For all gentle thoughts and mild: REFRAIN

For each perfect gift of thine,
Peace on earth and joy in heav'n;
For thyself, best gift divine,
To our world so freely giv'n: REFRAIN

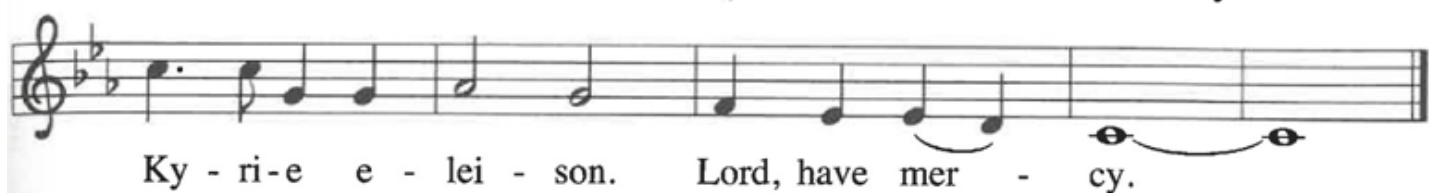
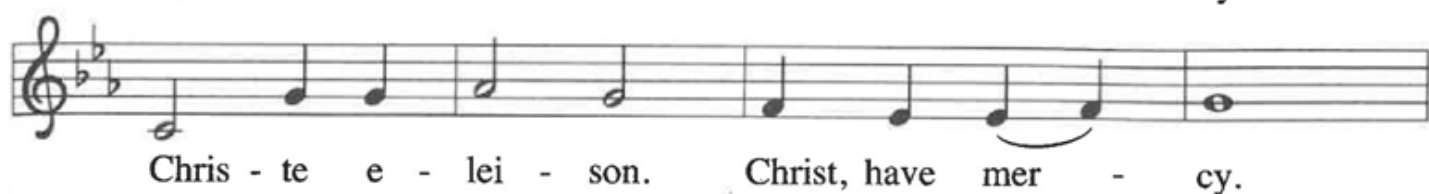
*Greeting

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

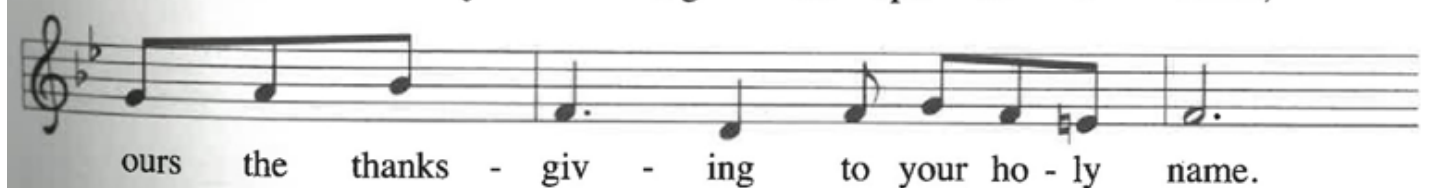
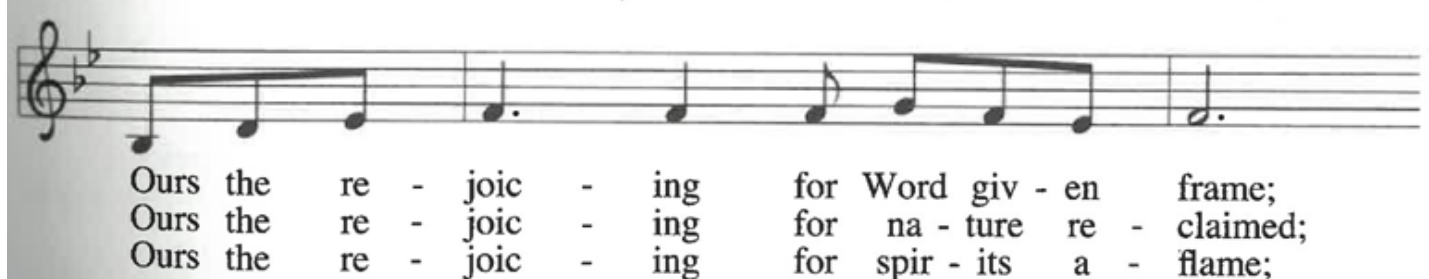
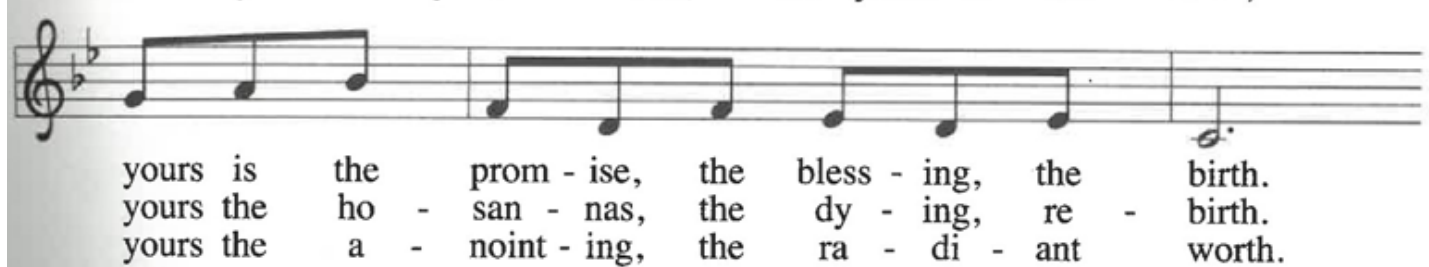
C: And also with you

*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 Jeremiah 15:15-21 Celebrate pg. 1

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Psalm 26:1-8 (read responsively) Cel. pg. 2

Second Reading Romans 12:9-21 Celebrate pg. 3

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

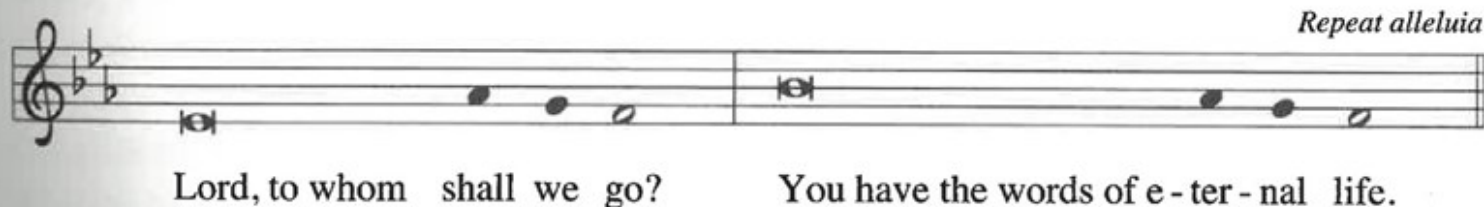
C: Thanks be to God.

*Gospel Acclamation

Blue #33



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



*Gospel Reading

Mathew 16:21-28

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. James P. Lapp

*Hymn of the Day

“Spirit, Open My Heart” ACS #1043

REFRAIN

Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving.
Spirit, open my heart.

1. God, replace my stony heart
with a heart that's kind and tender.
All my coldness and fear to your grace I now surrender.

REFRAIN

2. Write your love upon my heart
as my law, my goal, my story.
In each thought, word, and deed,
may my living bring you glory.

REFRAIN

3. May I weep with those who weep;
Share the joy of friend and neighbor.
As I live from day to day, love will be my finest labor.

REFRAIN

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 "Jesus Loves Me" Red #595

Jesus loves me! This I know,
for the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to him belong,
they are weak, but he is strong.

REFRAIN

Yes, Jesus loves me, yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! He who died
heaven's gates to open wide;
He will wash away my sin,
let his little child come in.

REFRAIN

(Hymn continued)

Jesus loves me! He will stay
close beside me all the way;
When at last I come to die,
he will take me home on high.

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

Rite of Holy Closure

For St. Stephen's Child Development Center

Dialogue

(All Staff and Board members please come to the front)

P: All things come to an end,
but the teaching of the Lord has no bounds.

C: Lead us in your truth, O God.

P: Everyone will stand in awe and declare God's works;
they will ponder what God has done.

C: Lead us in your truth.

P: Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and sustainer of our faith.

C: Lead us in your truth.

P: Today we acknowledge for the last time in this congregation the 14 year ministry with children and families in Santa Cruz County through our Child Development Center, it's Board of Directors and Staff (Named).

We give thanks for the ministry that has happened through this effort and for the people who have been fed and nurtured in the Christian faith here. Even as we mark the end of a significant era in the life of St. Stephen's, we lift up how we are all participants in God's mission that will always continue on beyond this day and place.

Reading John 8:12

P: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

Prayer

P: Gracious God, we thank you for the work and witness of your servants here who have enriched this congregation and community and shared their gifts. We praise you for shared joys and accomplishments and commend this work to you. Now bless and preserve your servants at this time of transition. Day by day guide them and give them what is needed, friends to cheer their way, and a clear vision of that to which you are now calling them. Grant that we may continue to bear witness to Christ in lives that are built on faith and love; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Friend.

C: Amen.

Declaration

P: With thanks to God for the work accomplished through St. Stephen's Child Development Center, I declare this school to be closed in the name of the God our Creator, God our fellow human Jesus Christ, and of God the Holy Spirit. May the witness of the people who have ministered in the name of Jesus Christ here be undiminished and continue on

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

"Will You Come and Follow Me"
(The Summons)

Red #798

"Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
Will you let my name be known,
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?"

"Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare,
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer pray'r in you and you in me?"

“Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the pris’ners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean,
and do such as this unseen,
And admit to what I mean in you and you in me?”

“Will you love the you you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you’ve found
to reshape the world around,
Through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?”

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my
name.

Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.

In your company I’ll go
where your love and footsteps show.

Thus I’ll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

*Dismissal

P: Go in Peace, Christ is sending you.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Music

Serving Today

Reader: Barbara Johnston

Coffee Host: Scout Troop #633

Altar Guild: Candace Anderson

Office Support: Sheila Buswell & Sherilyn Jager

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.

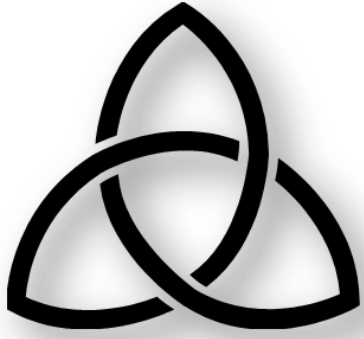
All are available at
<https://ststephenslutheran.org>
Or by scanning this QR code.



Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM *Mark Linder, Ross Johnston, Doug Yaryan, Uncle Jim, Sam, Rob, Debbie Greso, James White, Ryan Sharon, Stetson, Raleigh, Cheryl Crutch, Doris Cruthc, Eleara Sanchez, Jeffery, Zaun family, Doug Lentz, 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. Jim

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.

Sign up for Altar Flowers September & November
Dedicate to loved ones

Volunteers
NEEDED



Coffee Host:
Sept. 6 & Sept. 27

Reader: Sept. 27

Host AFC Shelter Dinner: Oct. 31
sign up for one item

Upcoming Events:

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

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| TODAY | Welcome Scouts
Thanks for your goodies!!! |
| Sept. 1 | Scouts 6:00 pm |
| Sept. 1 | Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm
Discretion Brewery 41st Ave.
Faith Questions genuine community |
| Sept. 2 | Bible Study Zoom 7:30 pm |
| Sept. 3 | Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm |
| Sept. 3 & 17 | Women's Bold Café 6:00pm
devotions and potluck |
| Sept. 4 | A. A. Group 7:00 pm |
| Sept. 11 | New musical group to use the Fellowship
hall Fridays 11-1 "Next Stage Productions" |
| Sept 10 | Circle of Promise 10:30 am |
| Sept 11-13 | SPS Women of ELCA Retreat — Danville
Christa is going, anyone else? |
| Sept 12 | Embroider's Guild 10—4 |
| Sept. 20 | Circle of Promise Boutique & Bake Sale |
| Oct. 4 | Blessing of the Animals 10 am |

Pastor's Office Hours Wed & Thurs. 10:00 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

*"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