

Lord, how often should I forgive?

MATTHEW 18:21



16th Sunday after Pentecost

September 13, 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 pours love into our hearts
and healing upon the earth.

C: **Amen.**

P: Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

**C: we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness
In the world and in our own hearts.**

Creation groans from overuse.

Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.

Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.

**Divisions disrupt your call
to show genuine love to others.**

Turn our hearts back to you.

Restore our world and reconcile us to one another.

Renew us to live as your holy people,

Following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

P: Hear this good news:

We have peace with God through + Jesus Christ,

In whom there is no condemnation,

But only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.

Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

C: Amen.

*Opening Hymn *"All Creatures of Our God and King"*

Red #835 (vs. 1-4, 7)

All Creatures of our God and King,

Lift up your voice with us and sing:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

O burning sun with golden beam

And silver moon with softer gleam:

Refrain

Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

O rushing wind and breezes soft,

O clouds that ride the winds aloft:

Oh, praise him! Alleluia!

O rising morn, in praise rejoice,

O lights of evening, find a voice.

Refrain (continued)

O flowing waters, pure and clear,
Make music for your Lord to hear.
Oh, praise him! Alleluia!
O fire so masterful and bright,
Providing us with warmth and light. *Refrain*

Dear mother earth, who day by day
Unfolds rich blessings on our way,
Oh, praise him! Alleluia!
The fruits and flow'rs that verdant grow,
Let them his praise abundant show. *Refrain*

Let all things their Creator bless
And worship god in humbleness.
Oh, praise him! Alleluia!
Oh, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One. *Refrain*

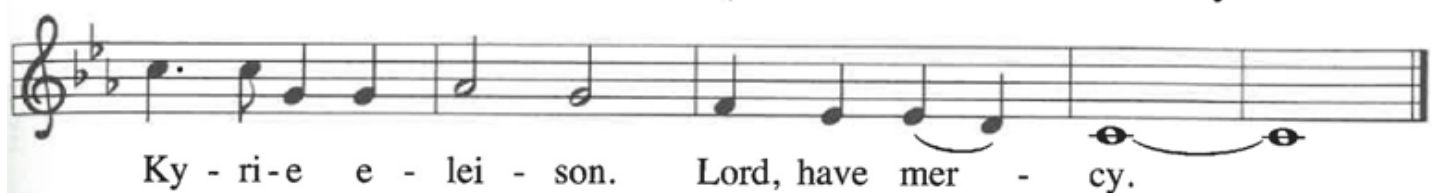
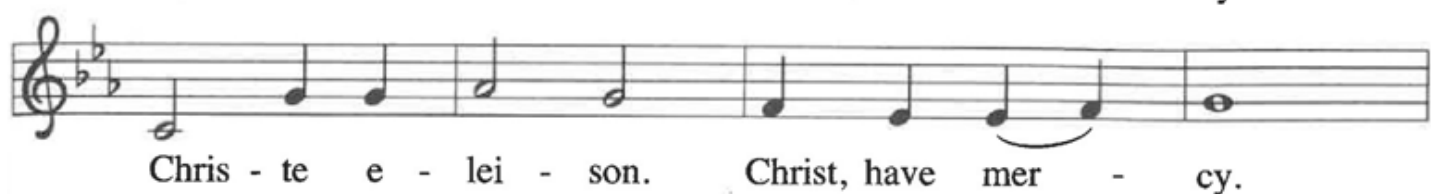
*Greeting

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

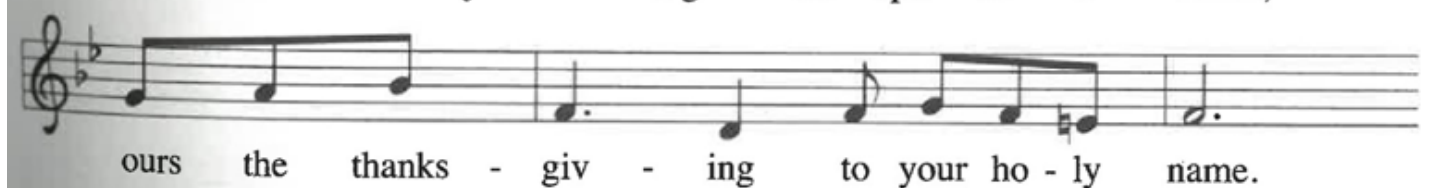
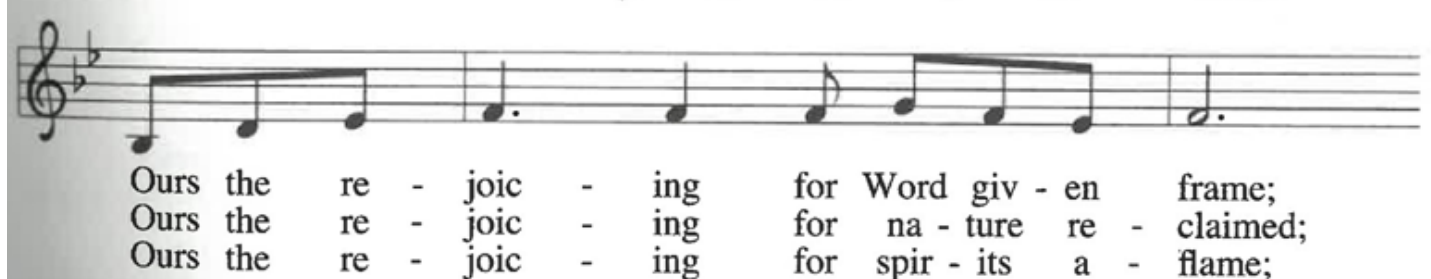
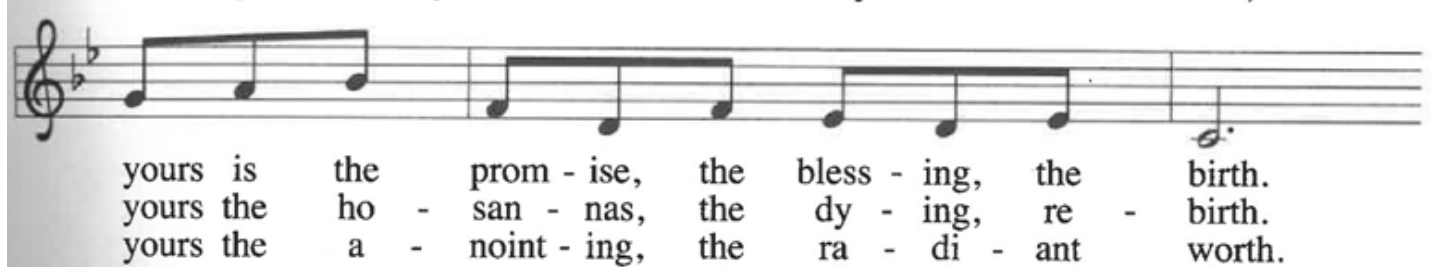
C: And also with you

*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

Genesis 50:15-21

Celebrate pg. 1

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm

Psalm 103:1-13 (choir & congregation) Cel. pg. 2

Second Reading

Romans 14:1-12

Celebrate pg. 3

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

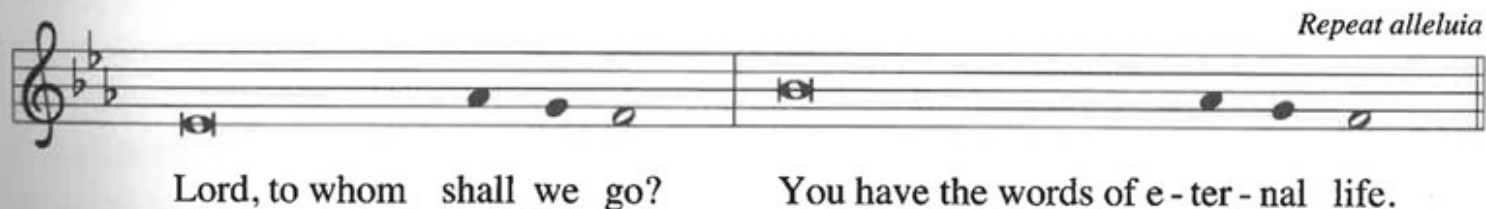
C: Thanks be to God.

*Gospel Acclamation

Blue #33



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



*Gospel Reading

Mathew 18:21-35 Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Holy Gospel acc. to St. Matthew, the 18th 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

"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. (continued)

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.

The Prayers of the Church

Celebrate, Page 4

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 “All Are Welcome”

Offering Prayer

P: God of creation,
You send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly.
All blessings are from you;
make us generous with what we have.
Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts
in service to you and in love to our neighbors,
today and always.
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...

*Words of Institution

*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.**

*Invitation to Communion

P: Christ invites you to this table.
All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

(Please be seated)

Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Communion Hymn

“Goodness Is Stronger Than Evil” #721 (repeat often)

Goodness is stronger than evil;
Love is stronger than hate;
Light is stronger than darkness;
Life is stronger than death;
vict’ry is ours, vict’ry is ours,
Through God who loves us.
Vict’ry is ours, vict’ry is ours,
Through God who loves us.

The Sending

Prayer after Communion

P: Sustaining God, with this bread and cup,
you nourish us with mercy and abundant life.
By your spirit, send us from this table to a needy world.
Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love,
following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

C: Amen

*Blessing

P: The God of love
draw you into full accord and one mind
in the body of Christ Jesus.

C: Amen.

P: The God of hope
grant you strength and joy in all circumstances
through the interceding of the Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: The God of grace
+ bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

*Closing Hymn

“In Thee Is Gladness” #867

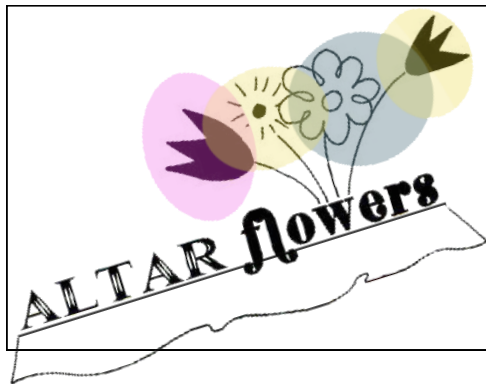
1. In thee is gladness, amid all sadness,
Jesus, sunshine of my heart.
By thee are given the gifts of heaven,
thou the true Redeemer art.
Our souls thou wakest,
our bonds thou breakest.
Who trusts thee surely has built securely,
and stands forever: Alleluia!
Our hearts are pining to see thy shining;
dying or living, to thee are cleaving;
naught can us sever: Alleluia!
2. Jesus is ours! We fear no powers,
not of earth or sin or death.
He sees and blesses in worst distresses,
he can change them in a breath.
Wherefore the story tell of God's glory
with heart and voices; all heav'n rejoices
in him forever: Alleluia!
We shout for gladness, triumph o'er sadness,
love him and praise him
and still shall raise him
glad hymns forever: Alleluia!

*Dismissal

P: Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Music Text & Music Marty Haugen 1950



Given by Janet Slay
In memory of Chris

Serving Today

Reader: Steven Hendrickson

Coffee Host: Rebecca Wickham

Altar Guild: Candace Anderson

Office Support: Candace Anderson, Sheila Buswell
& Sherilyn Jager



Sister Parish Sunday Today

Santa Cruz al Salvador connects Monterey Bay Area faith communities with communities in El Salvador, enhancing and enriching the lives of all participants. This mission is guided by the philosophy of accompaniment — walking together in a solidarity resulting in interdependence and mutual respect.

"Building relationships for better lives": What does this mean? We were often asked "What do you do when you go to El Salvador?" and "Do you build homes or schools or churches?" Without construction skills, the founders focused on another approach. If we build *relationships* between the visitors and the visited, it just might improve the lives of both.

The delegation this year is November 16-24. We are working on the itinerary. Talk to us today if you are interested in going!

We are instituting university student sponsorships as a way to connect with and support college students. Ask how you can be involved.

Circle of Promise

Bake Sale & Boutique Sunday September 20th!!

This is your opportunity to prepare for holiday entertaining and gift giving. Craft makers, Bakers, Jam and Jelly makers are encouraged to prepare items over the summer to contribute. Sale proceeds will go to the Kitchen Renovation fund.

Circle of Promise meetings are the second Thursday of the month. Next meeting **October 8th**, at **10:30** in the Fireside room

We invite you to join us as we learn from speakers representing outreach programs that further Christ's love and mercy in our community.

For information contact Tina Gates



**WOMEN'S
WISDOM
CIRCLE™**

**We are calling a circle and invite you to join
with us in a self-discovery process.**

The circle is an ancient form of meeting that has gathered us into respectful conversation for thousands of years. In a circle, people shift from informal socializing into a receptive attitude of thoughtful speaking and deep listening.

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.

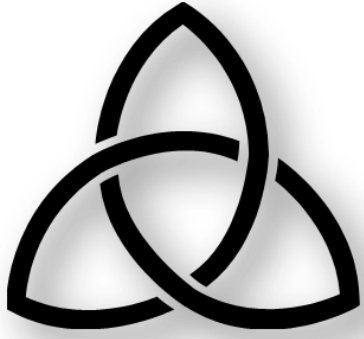
All are available at
<https://ststephenslutheran.org>
Or by scanning this QR code.



Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM Dorothy Ronning, Mark Linder, Thomas Vierrra, Felix Rodriguez, Monique Jones, Julie Francis, Kellie Dought, Doug Yaryan, Rob, Debbie Greso, James White, Ryan Sharon, Stetson, Raleigh, Cheryl Crutch, Doris Crutch, Eleara Sanchez, Jeffery, Zaun family, Doug Lentz, Barbara Allen & Family, Jordan Perez, Fred, Rev. Will & Dorothy Sieburg, Pam Huypner, Bob Zigler, Kathybelle, Taiyo, Kat, Sina & Bella, Chad Fields, James, Don, Kevin, Liz, Sam, Kathy M., Nancy, Grey, Levi, James, Galahad, Debbie, Sam, Nate Barker, 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 & women of Armed Forces, and the Youth of today.



Trinity Tuesday

(Pub Theology / Discussion)

One Beverage ~ One Hour ~ One Question

Tuesday October 6 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 October 18 & November
Dedicate to loved ones

Coffee Host:
Oct. 11 & 18 Nov. 1

Readers:
October

Host AFC Shelter Dinner: Oct. 31
sign up for one item
St. John's, Aptos 6 pm

Volunteers
Needed



Upcoming Events:

September Benevolence Offering =
Lutheran Campus Ministry (revised)

Sept. 15 Scouts 6:00 pm

Sept. 16 Bible Study Zoom 7:30 pm

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

Sept. 17 Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm

Sept. 18 New musical group to use the Fellowship hall Fridays 11-1 “Next Stage Productions”

Sept. 18 A. A. Group 7:00 pm

Sept. 20 Circle of Promise Boutique & Bake Sale

Sept. 22 Newsletter Deadline

Sept. 27 Guest music during worship (Next Stage Prod.)

Sept. 29 Newsletter Collating 2:00 pm helpers needed

Oct. 4 Blessing of the Animals 10 am

Oct. 6 Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm
Discretion Brewery 41st Ave.

Oct. 8 Circle of Promise 10:30 am
Faith Questions genuine community

Oct 10 Embroider's Guild 10—4

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

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
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp
Custodian: John Hopping
Powerpoint: Jay Johnston, Kent Madsen & Barbara Rice

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