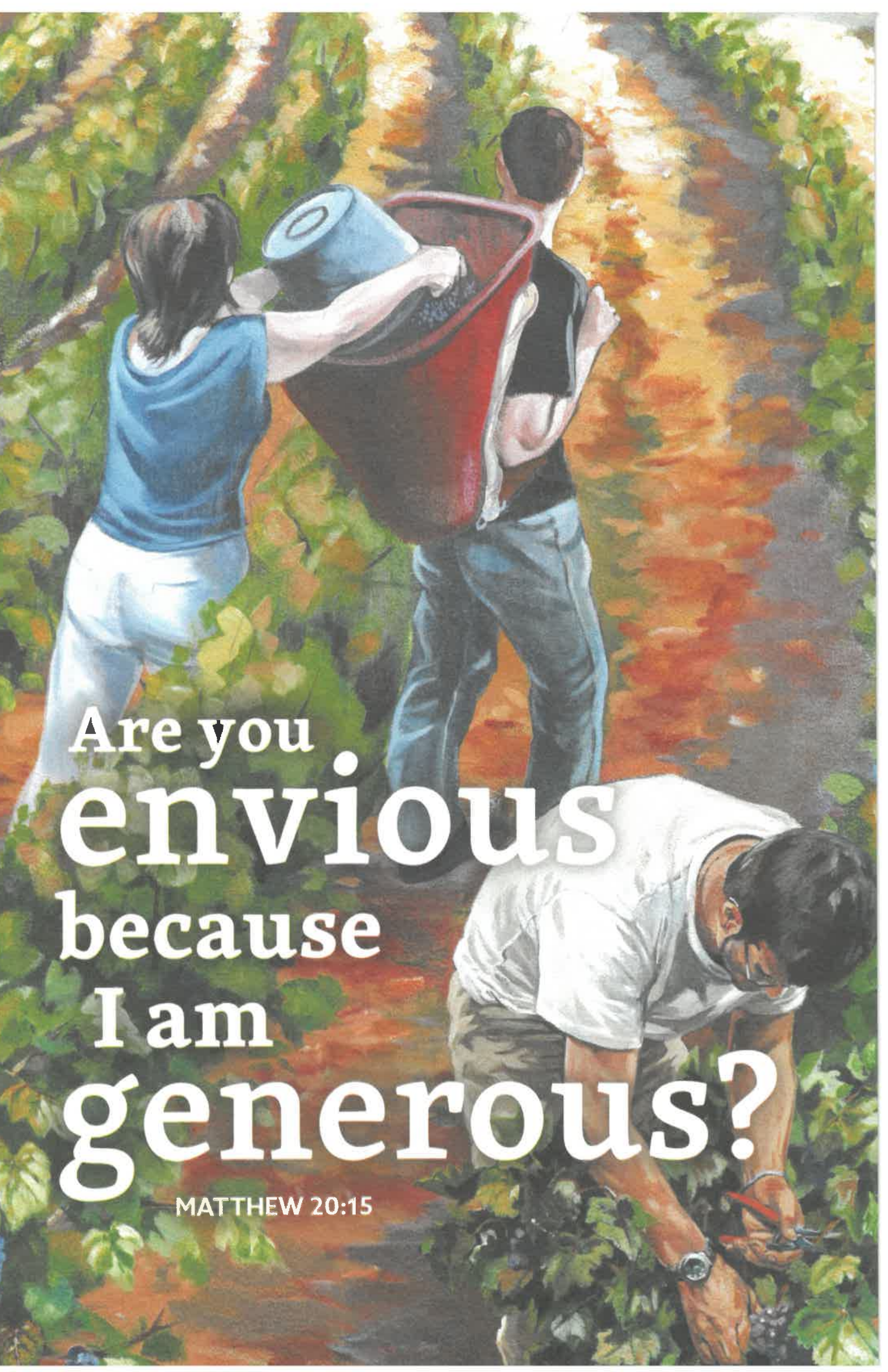




Are you
envious
because
I am
generous?

MATTHEW 20:15

17th Sunday after Pentecost

September 20, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Music “Sonata” by C.V. Stanford, Op .1149

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 *“Faith Begins by Letting Go” Blue #1004*

1

Faith begins by letting go,
giving up what had seemed sure,
taking risks and pressing on,
though the way feels less secure:
pilgrimage both right and odd,
trusting all our life to God.

2

Faith endures by holding on,
keeping mem’ry’s roots alive
so that hope may bear its fruit;
promise-fed, our souls will thrive,
not through merit we possess
but by God’s great faithfulness.

(hymn continued)

3

Faith matures by reaching out,
stretching minds, enlarging hearts,
sharing struggles, living prayer,
binding up the broken parts;
till we find the commonplace
ripe with witness to God's grace.

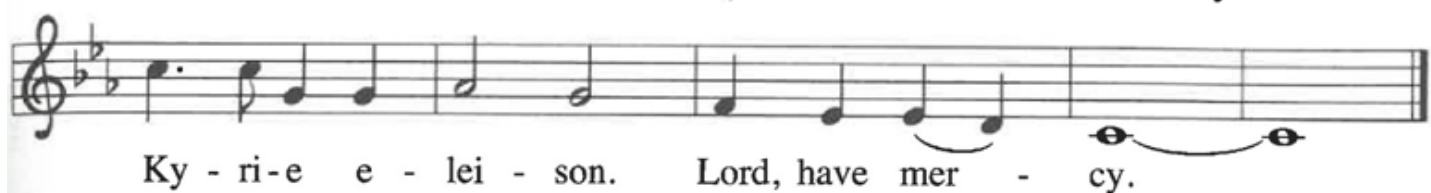
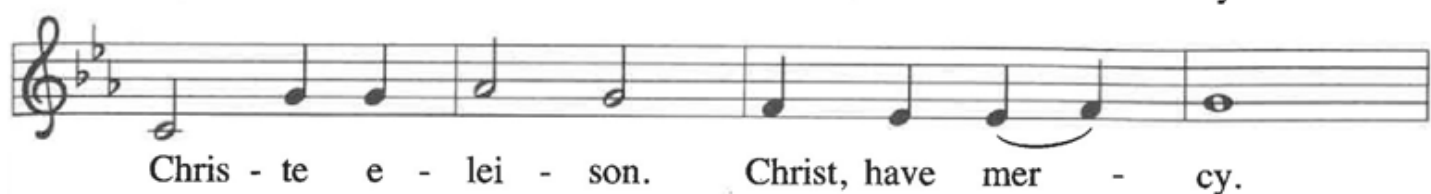
*Greeting

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

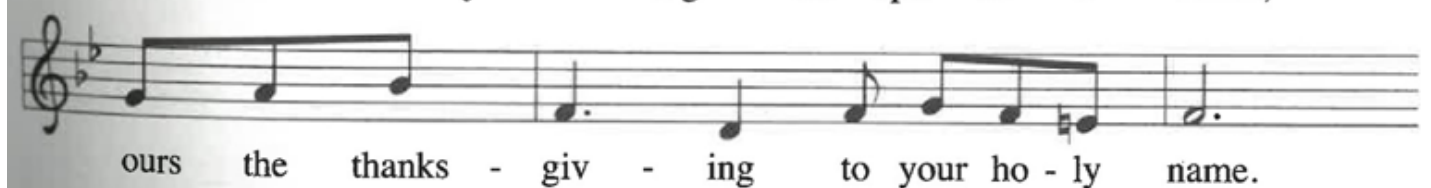
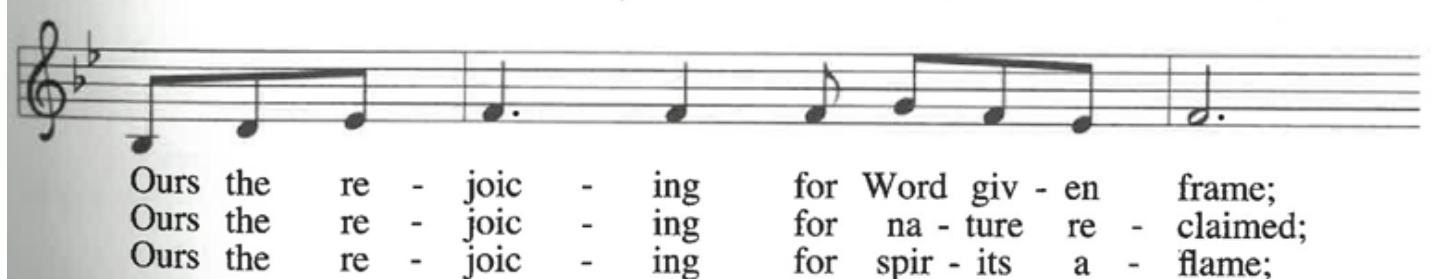
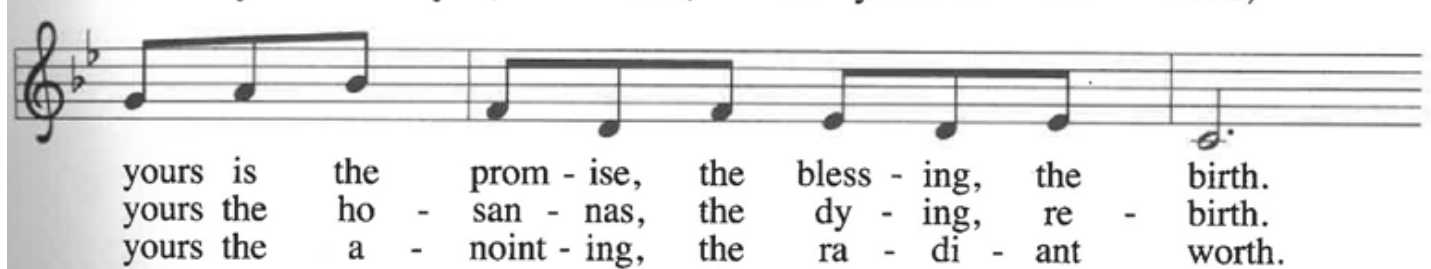
C: And also with you

*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 Jonah 3:10—4:11 Celebrate pg. 1

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Psalm 145:1-8 (choir & congregation) Cel. pg. 2

Second Reading Philippians 1:21-30 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 20:1-16

Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Holy Gospel acc. to St. Matthew, the 20th 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

“Lord of All Hopefulness” Red #765

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy:
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the
lathe:
Be there at our labors, and give us, we pray,
Your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
Your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace:
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
Your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm:
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Farewell & Godspeed

Jay Johnston

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 “Draw the Circle Wide” by Gordon Light

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 you 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



Communion Hymn

"Take My Life, That I May Be" Red #583

REFRAIN

Take my life, that I may be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee;
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I with~hold;
Take my intellect, and use
Every pow'r as thou shalt choose.

Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from thee.

Take my will and make it thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is thine own;
It shall be thy royal throne.

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

“Rise Up, O Saints of God!” Red #669

Rise up, O saints of God! From vain ambitions turn;
Christ rose triumphant that your hearts
with nobler zeal might burn.

Speak out, O saints of God!
Despair engulfs earth's frame;
As heirs of God's baptismal grace,
The word of hope proclaim.

Rise up, O saints of God!
The kingdom's task embrace;
Redress sin's cruel consequence;
Give justice larger place.

Give heed, O saints of God! Creation cries in pain;
Stretch forth your hand of healing now,
With love the weak sustain.

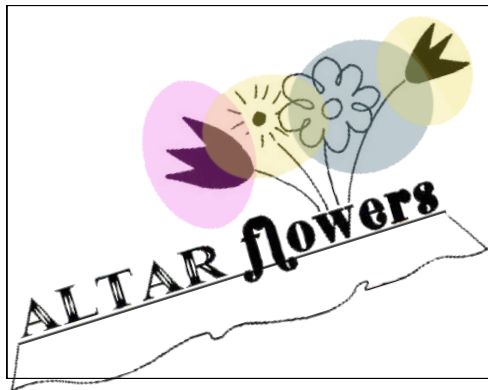
Commit your hearts to seek
the paths which Christ has trod;
And, quickened by the Spirit's pow'r,
rise up, O saints of God!

*Dismissal

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

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Music “Grand Choeur”, Variation III, R. Purvis



Given by Steven Grey
In honor of 51st anniversary
of marriage to wife Sally

Serving Today

Reader: Bill Anderson

Coffee Host: Bill & Candace Anderson

Altar Guild: Candace Anderson

Office Support: Candace Anderson, Sheila Buswell
& Sherilyn Jager

REFORMATION SUNDAY

OCT. 25TH

10:00am WORSHIP
 GERMAN MUSIC LITURGY

11:00am OKTOBER FEAST
 & Fun

Brats Provided!

You bring Sides, Dessert & Beer!

See sign ups

“Roll out the barrel . . . ”
with an OOMPA Band

“Thirsty Nine” band is on hold
pending numbers

A Free will offering will be collected to
go to their music scholarships



Special music guest
Next Sunday, Sept. 27

Offertory Song by Miss Nancy Adams
from our new facility users,
Next Stage Productions

Celebrating



& Día de Muertos

November 1

Bring a photo of your departed loved ones, framed or unframed, to display on a remembrance table in the church narthex. You can pick up your photo beginning Sunday, November 8 following worship.

Don't have a physical photo or can't come in-person to church right now? Email a digital photo by October 28 (or any other questions you may have) to Christa Garcia at christawynekegarcia@gmail.com and she will print and display them for you.

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.

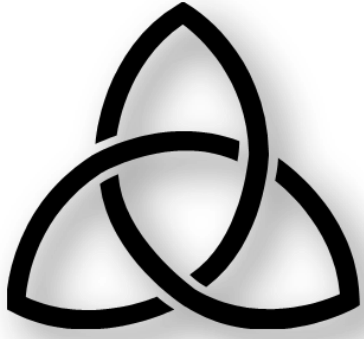
All are available at
<https://ststephenslutheran.org>
Or by scanning this QR code.



Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM *Family of Mark Linder, Dorothy Ronning, James, Andre, Lurline, Tyeleiga, Diane Johnnie, Phill, Tina Brown, Alma Black, Andrea Black Tamsen, Leila, Doug Yaryan, Thimas Viera, Felix Rodriguez, Monique Jones, Julie Francis, Kellie Dought, Rob, Ross Johnston, Debbie Greso, James White, Ryan Sharon, Stetson, Raleigh, Cheryl Crutch, Doris Crutch, Eleara Sanchez, Jeffery, Zaun family, Doug Lentz, Barbara Allen & Family, Fred, Rev. Will & Dorothy Sieburg, Pam Huypner, Bob Zigler, Kathybelle, Taiyo, Kat, 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, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Isaac & Marissa, Mateo & Lina, Atlas, Katarina.*

LONG TERM *Pr. Gary & Corinne Stevenson, 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, Ruth, 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*



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 & Nov. 1 – 22

Readers:
October 11 & 25

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

Volunteers
NEEDED



Upcoming Events:

September Benevolence Offering =

Lutheran Campus Ministry

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Sept. 20 | Circle of Promise Boutique & Bake Sale |
| Sept. 22 | Newsletter Deadline |
| Sept. 22 | Scouts 6:00 pm |
| Sept. 23 | Bible Study Zoom 7:30 pm |
| Sept. 24 | Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm |
| Sept. 25 | New musical group to use the Fellowship hall Fridays 11-1 "Next Stage Productions" |
| Sept. 25 | A. A. Group 7:00 pm |
| Sept. 27 | Guest music during worship (Next Stage Prod.) |
| Sept. 29 | Newsletter Collating 2:00 pm helpers needed |
| Oct. 1 & 15 | Women's Bold Café 6:00pm
devotions and potluck |
| Oct. 4 | Blessing of the Animals 10 am |
| Oct. 6 | Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm
Discretion Brewry 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

Music used by permission Onelicense #A-706539