

Go and work in the vineyard today

MATTHEW 21:28



18th Sunday after Pentecost

September 27, 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

"God is Here"

Red #526

God is here! As we your people
meet to offer praise and prayer,
May we find in fuller measure
what it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us,
all our varied skills and arts
wait the coming of the Spirit
Into open minds and hearts.

Here are symbols to remind us
Of our life long need of grace;
Here are table, font, and pulpit;
Here the cross has central place.
Here in honesty of preaching,
Here in silence, as in speech,

(Hymn Continued)

Here, in newness and renewal,
God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome
in the Shepherd's flock and fold;
Here as bread and wine are taken,
Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant
Seek in worship to explore
What it means in daily living
To believe and to adore.

Lord of all, of church and kingdom,
In an age of change and doubt,
Keep us faithful to the gospel;
Help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication,
All we have to give, receive;
We, who cannot live without you,
We adore you! We believe!

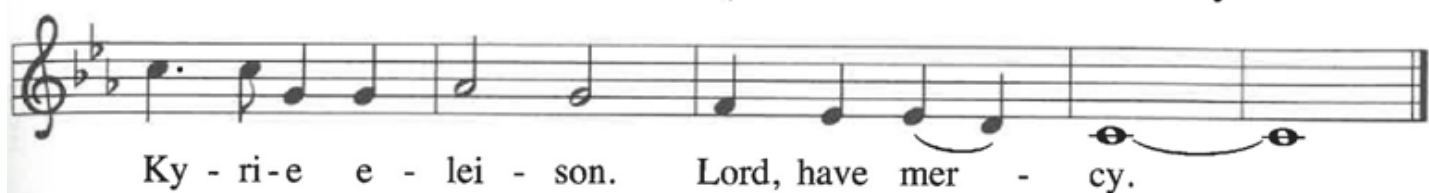
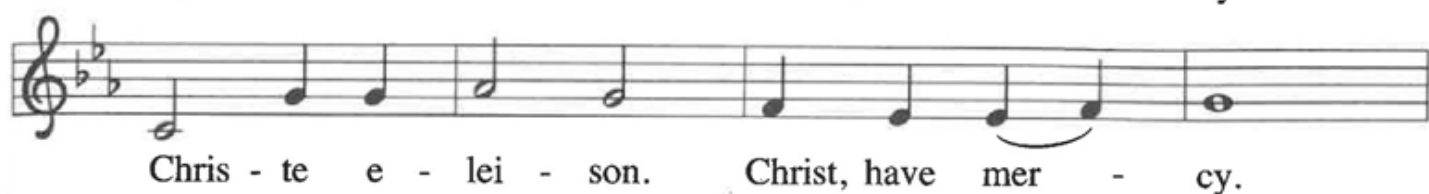
*Greeting

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

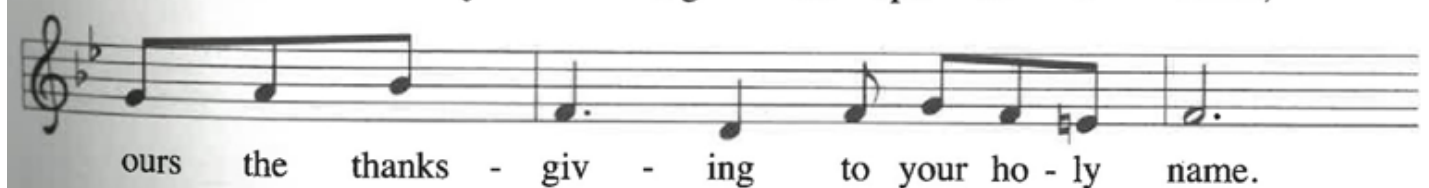
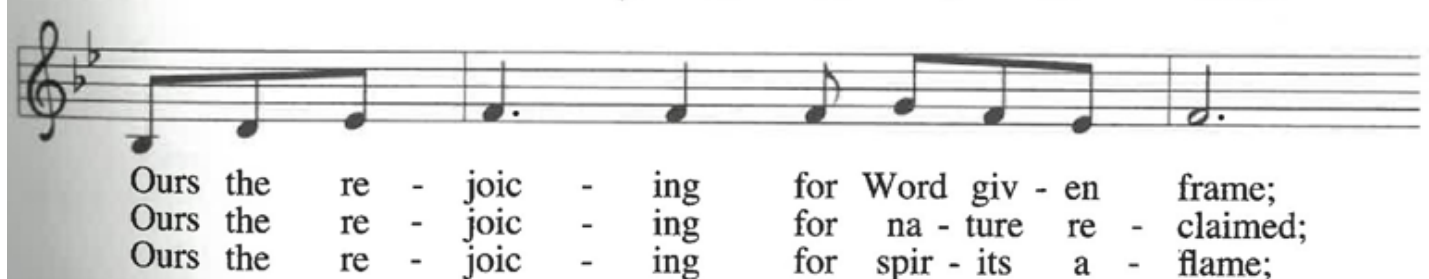
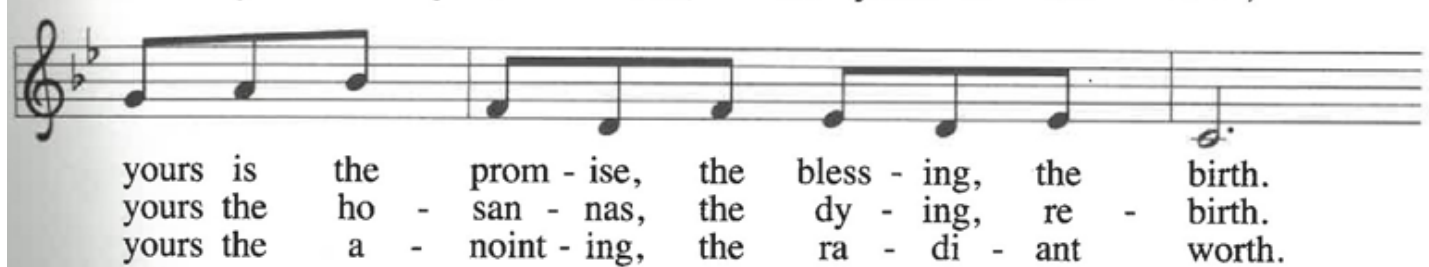
C: And also with you

*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 Ezekiel 18:1-, 25-32 Celebrate pg. 1

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Psalm 25:1-9 (choir & congregation) Cel. pg. 2

Second Reading Philippians 2:1-13 Celebrate pg. 3

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

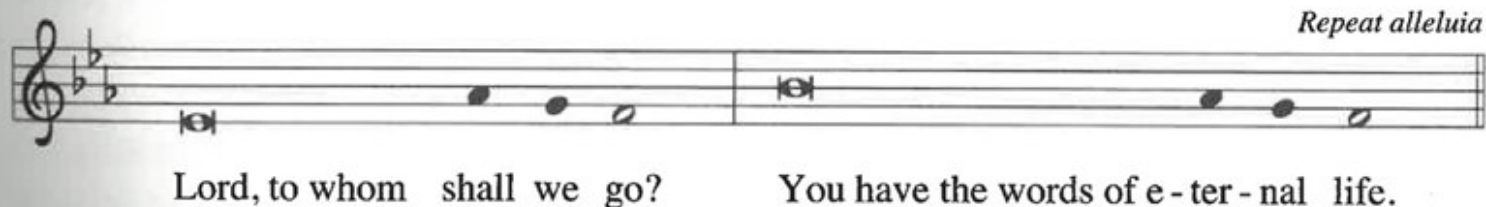
C: Thanks be to God.

*Gospel Acclamation

Blue #33



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



*Gospel Reading

Mathew 21:23-32

Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Holy Gospel acc. to St. Matthew, the 21th 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

“O Master, Let Me Walk with You”

Red #818

O Master, let me walk with you
In lowly paths of service true;
Tell me your secret; help me bear
the strain of toil, the fret of care.

Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear winning word of love;
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
And guide them in the homeward way.

Teach me your patience; share with me
A closer, dearer company,
in work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
in trust that triumphs over wrong,

In hope that sends a shining ray
far down the future's broad'ning way,
in peace that only you can give;
with you, O Master, let me live.

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 “It Goes How it Goes” from Norma Rae
Miss Nancy Adams, Next Stage Productions

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

"Take Oh, Take Me As I Am" Red #814 (repeat often)

Take, oh, take me as I am;
summon out what I shall be;
Set your seal upon my heart and live in me.

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

"The Lord Now Sends Us Forth" Red #538 (sing twice)

The Lord now sends us forth
With hands to serve and give,
To make of all the earth
A better place to live. (Repeat)

The angels were not sent
Into this world of pain
To do what we were meant
to do in Jesus' name;

That falls to you and me
And all who are made free.
Help us O Lord, we pray,
To do your will today.

*Dismissal

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

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Music

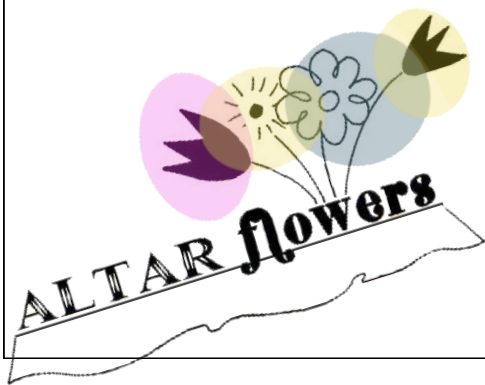
Serving Today

Reader: Elke Spires

Coffee Host: Margaret Schraft

Altar Guild: Tina Gates

Office Support: Candace Anderson, Sheila Buswell
& Sherilyn Jager



Given by Jennifer Swan
For Lola



Host AFC Shelter Dinner
October 31 5:45—7:15 pm
St. John's - 125 Canterbury Dr., Aptos

Come offer your resources to our neighbors without housing. Along the way, we find a deeper understanding that we are all worthy of dignity and connection. You can assist those without homes to a better life.

Since 2012, the AFC has been sponsoring a nightly transitional shelter for 15 participants at faith communities from Santa Cruz to Aptos. We rotate daily from site to site. St. Stephen's has committed to dinners months with 5 Saturdays. JANUARY 30 is the next. ARE WE ABLE TO FULFILL THIS???

Sign up NOW for main dish or veggies .
For more info 476-4700

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



Celebrating



&

Día de los 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 christawynekengarcia@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.

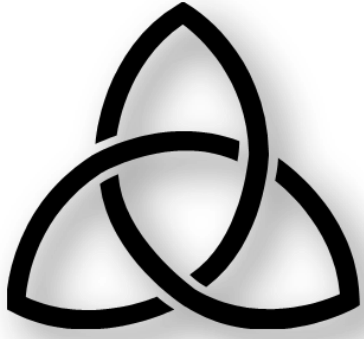
All are available at
<https://ststephenslutheran.org>
Or by scanning this QR code.



Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM *Alfred Family, Family of Mark Linder, Dorothy Ronning, James, Kavon, Janet, Shelton, Judy, Mary, Brandon, Josie, Andre, Lurline, Tyeleiga, Diane Johnnie, Phill, Tina Brown, Alma Black, Andrea Black Tamsen, Leila, Doug Yaryan, Rob, Ross Johnston, Debbie Greso, James White, Jeffery, Zaun family, Doug Lentz, Barbara Allen & Family, 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 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 & Nov. 8 –22

Readers:
October 25

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

Volunteers
NEEDED



Upcoming Events:

September Benevolence Offering =
Lutheran Campus Ministry

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Sept. 29 | Newsletter Collating 2:00 pm helpers needed |
| Sept. 29 | Scouts 6:00 pm |
| Sept. 30 | Bible Study Zoom 7:30 pm |
| Oct. 1 & 15 | Women's Bold Café 6:00pm
devotions and potluck |
| Oct. 1 | Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm |
| Oct. 2 | "Next Stage Productions" 11 to 1 |
| Oct. 2 | A. A. Group 7:00 pm |
| Oct. 4 | Blessing of the Animals 10 am |
| Oct. 6 | Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm
Discretion Brewry 41st Ave.
Faith Questions genuine community |
| Oct. 8 | Circle of Promise 10:30 am |
| Oct 10 | Embroider's Guild 10—4 |
| Oct. 13 | Church Council 6:30 pm |
| Oct. 25 | Reformation / Oktoberfeast |
| Oct. 31 | Host AFC Shelter Dinner St. John's, Aptos 6 p |
| Nov. 1 | All Saints / Dia de los Muertos celebration |

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.
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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