



St. Stephen Lutheran Church

17th Sunday after Pentecost

September 20, 2026 9:30am

Rooted in our Tradition, Open to Yours

Welcome and Prelude

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,

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.

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.

Amen.



1 Lord of light, your name out - shin - ing all the stars and
 2 By the toil of faith - ful work - ers in some far out -
 3 Grant that knowl - edge, still in - creas - ing, at your feet may
 4 By the prayers of faith - ful watch - ers, nev - er si - lent



suns of space, use our tal - ents in your king - dom
 ly - ing field, by the cour - age where the ra - diance
 low - ly kneel; with your grace our tri - umphs hal - low,
 day or night; by the cross of Je - sus, bring - ing



as the ser - vants of your grace; use us to ful -
 of the cross is still re - vealed, by the vic - to -
 with your char - i - ty our zeal; lift the na - tions
 peace to all and heal - ing light; by the love that



fill your pur - pose in the gift of Christ your Son.
 ries of meek - ness, through re - proach and suf - f'ring won:
 from the shad - ows to the glad - ness of the sun:
 pass - es knowl - edge, mak - ing all your chil - dren one:



Refrain
 Fa - ther, as in high - est heav - en, so on earth your will be done.

Greeting

The grace of Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Assisting minister



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

The Reading **Jonah 3:10--4:11**

¹⁰ When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.

^{4:1} But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ² He prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. ³ And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴ And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" ⁵ Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

⁶ The LORD God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush. ⁷ But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

⁹ But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." ¹⁰ Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a

night and perished in a night. ¹¹ And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also many animals?"

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Gospel: **Matthew 10:1-16** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹ "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' ⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' ⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner,

¹² saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' ¹³ But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

~Please remain seated until the meal~



1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer - cy, like the wide-ness of the sea;
 2 There is wel - come for the sin - ner, and a prom - ised grace made good;
 3 For the love of God is broad - er than the mea - sures of our mind;
 4 'Tis not all we owe to Je - sus; it is some-thing more than all:



there's a kind-ness in God's jus - tice which is more than lib - er - ty.
 there is mer - cy with the Sav - ior; there is heal - ing in his blood.
 and the heart of the E - ter - nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind.
 great - er good be - cause of e - vil, larg - er mer - cy through the fall.



There is no place where earth's sor - rows are more felt than up in heav'n.
 There is grace e - nough for thou - sands of new worlds as great as this;
 But we make this love too nar - row by false lim - its of our own;
 Make our love, O God, more faith - ful; let us take you at your word,



There is no place where earth's fail - ings have such kind - ly judg - ment giv'n.
 there is room for fresh cre - a - tions in that up - per home of bliss.
 and we mag - ni - fy its strict-ness with a zeal God will not own.
 and our lives will be thanks - giv - ing for the good-ness of the Lord.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

Prayers of the People

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

Hold your church accountable for our unwillingness to share your good news and our anger at your generosity to others. **Nourish us by your grace to be witnesses to your love.** Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Guide scientists and researchers studying responses to the climate crisis **so that all your creation may inspire us to give thanks for your great goodness.** Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Show employers the benefits of equal pay standards for all their employees. Reconcile conflicts between employees. **Fill places of employment with camaraderie, and bring an end to employment disparity.** Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Encourage any who cannot work or who cannot work a full day with the truth that their value comes from your everlasting love for them. Provide for those who are injured, ill, and for all in any need, especially Inge, Dave & Pam, Judy, Scott, Nancy, Ted & Jacqui, Dan & Mary, Beth, Janet, Todd, Mary, Doris, Bud, Donna, Jill, Arianna, Amelia, Jareth and all those we hold in our hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Strengthen all those in this congregation whose labor serves the needs of others in the community. **Inspire all in this congregation to support community endeavors with our time and talents.** Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Comfort us with the promise of the resurrection **as we remember all our loved ones whose desire to be with Jesus is fulfilled.** Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

The Sharing of the Peace

Special Music

Many Will Come

St. Stephen Choir

Meal

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

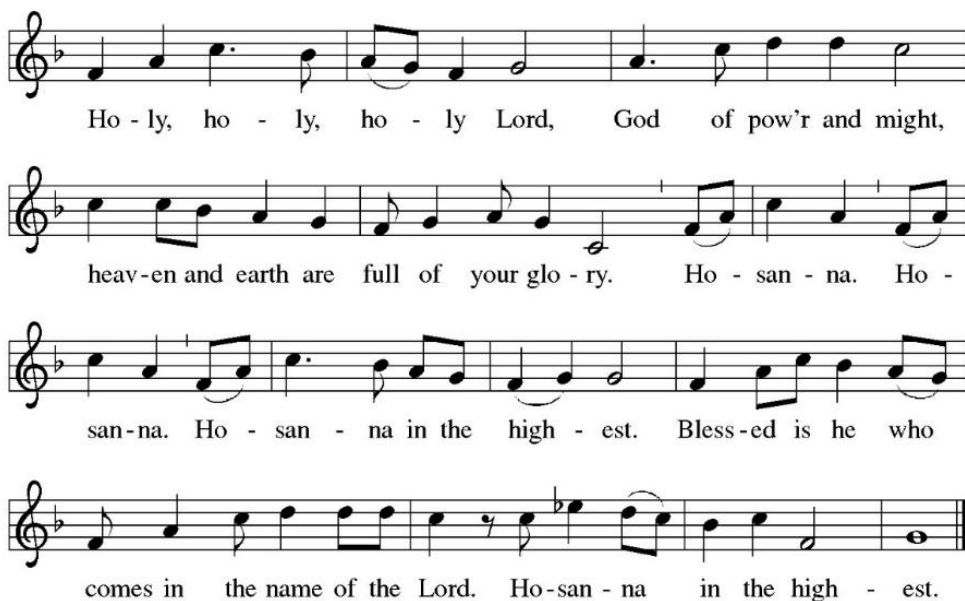
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Preface

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcomes death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opens to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



The 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.

Again after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

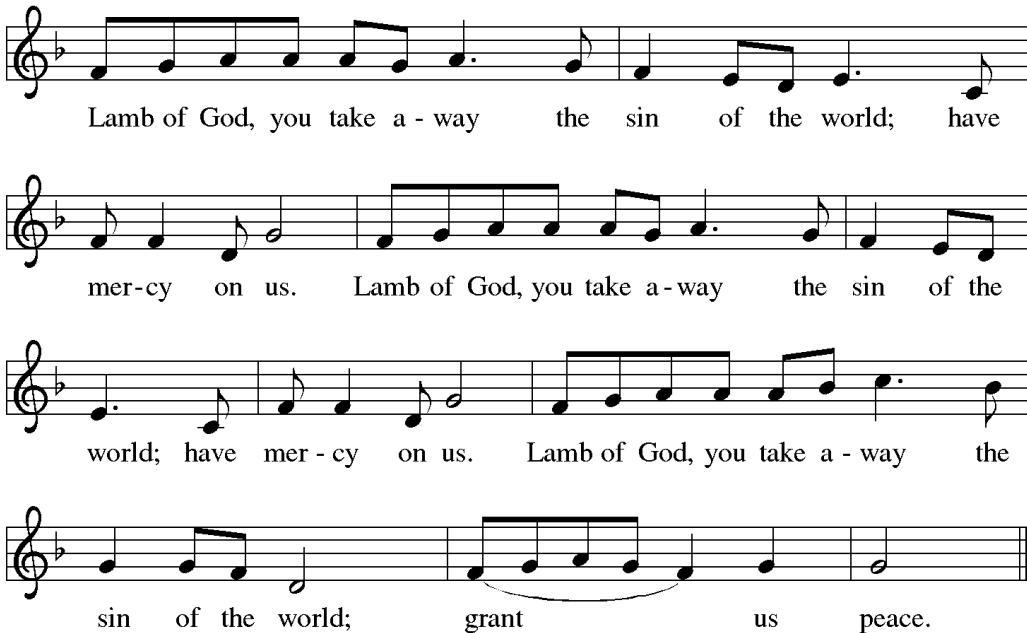
For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Communion

All baptized Christians are welcome to participate in Holy Communion. We ask children who have not had First Communion instruction, or adults who do not wish to receive communion, to keep their hands folded and they will receive a blessing.



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.

Post-Communion Prayer

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

Rise Up, O Saints of God!

ELW 669 vs 1,3,5



- 1 Rise up, O saints of God! From vain am - bi - tions turn;
- 2 Speak out, O saints of God! De - spair en - gulfs earth's frame;
- 3 Rise up, O saints of God! The king - dom's task em - brace;
- 4 Give heed, O saints of God! Cre - a - tion cries in pain;
- 5 Com - mit your hearts to seek the paths which Christ has trod;



Christ rose tri - um - phant that your hearts with no - bler zeal might burn.
as heirs of God's bap - tis - mal grace, the word of hope pro - claim.
re - dress sin's cru - el con - se - quence; give jus - tice larg - er place.
stretch forth your hand of heal - ing now, with love the weak sus - tain.
and, quick - ened by the Spir - it's pow'r, rise up, O saints of God!

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace. **Thanks be to God.**

Dismissal

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

Thanks be to God.