

*St. Stephen Lutheran Church*  
*August 30, 2020*  
*Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of the incurable wound of his suffering yet finds in God's words the delight of his heart. When Peter doesn't grasp Jesus' words about suffering, Jesus tells the disciples they will find their lives in losing them. Such sacrificial love is described by Paul when he urges us to associate with the lowly and not repay evil with evil. In worship we gather as a community that we might offer ourselves for the sake of our suffering world.

Prelude *"All Glory be to God on High"* by George Lachenauer

**Gathering**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

**Amen.**

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Reconciling God,

**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,  
and we deny your presence in our lives.**

**We place our hope in ourselves  
and rely on our own efforts.**

**We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.**

**We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.**

**We fear difference and do not welcome others  
as you have welcomed us.**

**We sin in thought, word, and deed.**

**By your grace, forgive us;**

**through your love, renew us;**

**and in your Spirit, lead us;**

**so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.**

Beloved of God,

by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God through ☩ Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## Gathering Hymn

*"O Jesus, I Have Promised"*

Hymn#810 vs 1-3

- 1 O Jesus, I have promised  
to serve you to the end;  
remain forever near me,  
my master and my friend.  
I shall not fear the battle  
if you are by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway  
if you will be my guide.
- 2 Oh, let me feel you near me;  
the world is ever near.  
I see the sights that dazzle,  
the tempting sounds I hear.  
My foes are ever near me,  
around me and within;  
but, Jesus, then draw nearer  
to shield my soul from sin.
- 3 Oh, let me hear you speaking  
in accents clear and still  
above the storms of passion,  
the murmurs of self-will.  
Now speak to reassure me,  
to hasten or control;  
now speak and make me listen,  
O Guardian of my soul.

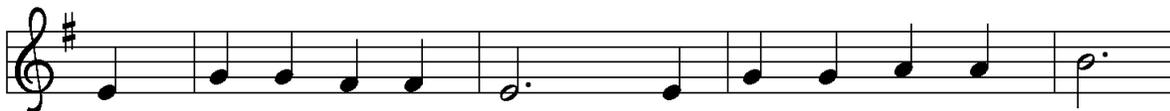
Text: John E. Bode, 1816-1874, alt.

## \*Apostolic Greeting

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

**And also with you.**

## \*Kyrie



1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.

2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.

3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.

Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.

Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

## Canticle of Praise



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.  
2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.  
3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:  
Son of God and gra - cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;  
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.  
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.  
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.  
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.  
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

## \*Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Word**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

## The First Lesson

**Romans 12: 9-21**

*Paul presents benchmarks for faithful relationships with Christians and non-Christians. Love is the unflinching standard of our behavior. When we encounter evil, we do not resort to its tactics but seek to overcome it with good. While Christians cannot control the actions and attitudes of others, we seek to live at peace with all people.*

A reading from Paul's epistle to the Romans, the 12th chapter.

<sup>9</sup>Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; <sup>10</sup>love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup>Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. <sup>13</sup>Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

<sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. <sup>17</sup>Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup>If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup>Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." <sup>20</sup>No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm

### **Psalm 26: 1-8**

<sup>1</sup>Give judgment for me, O LORD, for I have lived | with integrity;

I have trusted in the LORD and | have not faltered.

<sup>2</sup>**Test me, O | LORD, and try me;**  
**examine my heart | and my mind.**

<sup>3</sup>For your steadfast love is be- | fore my eyes;  
I have walked faithful- | ly with you.

<sup>4</sup>**I have not sat | with the worthless,**  
**nor do I consort with | the deceitful. R**

<sup>5</sup>I have hated the company of | evildoers;  
I will not sit down | with the wicked.

<sup>6</sup>**I will wash my hands in inno- | cence, O LORD,**  
**that I may go in procession | round your altar,**

<sup>7</sup>singing aloud a song | of thanksgiving  
and recounting all your won- | derful deeds.

<sup>8</sup>**LORD, I love the house in | which you dwell**  
**and the place where your glo- | ry abides.**

### The Second Lesson

### **Romans 13:1-7**

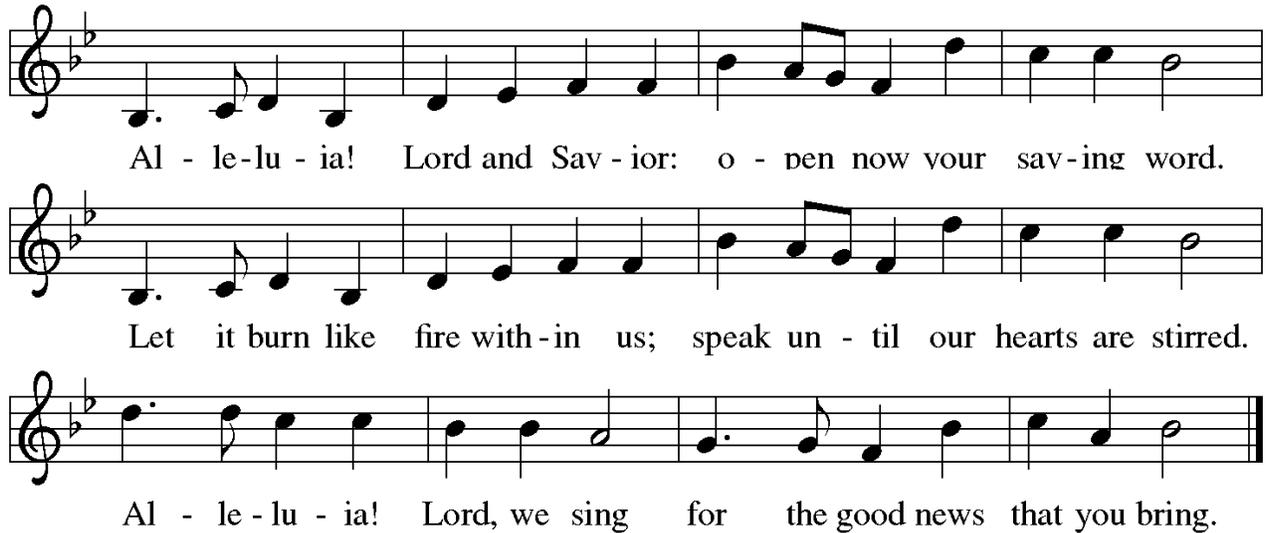
A reading from Paul's epistle to the Romans, the 13th chapter.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. <sup>2</sup>Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement. <sup>3</sup>For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; <sup>4</sup>for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority\* does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. <sup>5</sup>Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. <sup>6</sup>For the same reason you also pay

taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, busy with this very thing. <sup>7</sup>Pay to all what is due to them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God**

**\*Gospel Acclamation**



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.

Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.

Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

**\*Gospel Reading**

**Matthew 16:21 - 28**

*After Peter confesses that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:16), Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of his ministry. These words prove hard to accept, even for a disciple whom Jesus has called a “rock.”*

A reading from the Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 16th chapter.

**Glory to You o Lord.**

<sup>21</sup>From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. <sup>22</sup>And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” <sup>23</sup>But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

<sup>24</sup>Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. <sup>26</sup>For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

<sup>27</sup>“For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. <sup>28</sup>Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to You, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

Pastor Matthew Best

**\*Hymn of the Day**

*"Step by Step"*

Worship & Praise #132

O God You are my God  
And I will ever praise You  
O God You are my God  
And I will ever praise You  
I will seek You in the morning  
And I will learn to walk in Your ways  
And step by step You'll lead me  
And I will follow You all of my days

CCLI Song # 696994

David (Beaker) Strasser

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**\*Apostles Creed**

AM: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us profess our faith, using the words of the 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 Church**

*Congregational response after each petition:*

Hear us God, **C: Your mercy is great.**

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Almighty God, we come to you with grateful and humble hearts today. There is so much for which we are thankful—especially the gift of Jesus in our lives. We lift our prayers up to you, with the hope, faith and assurance that you are tenderly taking care of us, as our heavenly father who provides all that we need. Hear us, God.

**Your mercy is great.**

In scripture we hear your promise to Moses, to lead the Israelites to a land flowing with milk and honey. We also hear Moses questioning his ability and asking, “Who am I, God, that you would choose me?” We often have similar thoughts, and think that we’re unworthy, not qualified. But God we know the truth is that all of us, any of us, are worthy and capable. Help and guide us, to put our faith into action, and to live out our Christian faith. Hear us, God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of peace and justice, we pray for all nations and all leaders, especially those making decisions about life amid the pandemic, including education and schools. Strengthen them in mind, body and spirit, to make wise decisions in the best interests of the population. Hear us, God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Loving God, our world craves love and understanding across all types of division, hatred, political lines and racial lines. Help us to put Paul’s words into action, to heal and bridge those divisions we encounter in our daily lives. Let our love for others be sincere, may we cling to what is good, and hate what is evil. May we be shining examples of living in peace and harmony with one another, practicing hospitality, sharing with those in need. Guide us, so that we are not overcome by evil, but that we may overcome evil with good. Fill our hearts, minds and actions with good. Hear us, God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of grace, in today’s Gospel reading, we hear Jesus describing what it means to be one of his disciples. It means denying ourselves, taking up our crosses and following Jesus. We need your help and strength. Guide our footsteps to do your work. And let your face shine upon us as your servants. Hear us, God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, we pray for all people who are hurting, sick, hospitalized, and for families whose loved ones recently died. We pray for the broken, the lonely, homeless and marginalized. Please comfort anyone who is feeling forgotten or lonely. We especially pray for your healing hand, on all those affected by diseases including cancer and the coronavirus, and all medical professionals, hospitals, testing centers, doctors and nurses, providing care during this time of great need. We pray for the 174 thousand Americans who have died of COVID-19, the 5.7 million Americans diagnosed with the virus, millions more around the globe, and we pray for knowledge that leads to a vaccine. That’s a big prayer God but we know you can do incredible things. Hear us, God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God we pray for each and every member of St. Stephen today, plus each and every visitor, all friends from Dinners with Friends and all participants in our Flying J and Petro ministry. Bless Pastor Matthew and his family as he keeps the congregation connected and outreach moving forward during this challenging time. Hear us, God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

**\*Peace**

P: The Peace of Christ be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us show a sign of that peace!

**Offering**

The offering, whether in person or through digital means, is an act of worship. Worship, at its core, is a reverent love and devotion accorded to God. We give because God loves us first, and we are called to love God and neighbor as a result. The offering is one way we show our love of God.

To assist you in this act of worship, there are several ways to make your offering:

Go to [www.ststephenlc.org](http://www.ststephenlc.org) and scroll to the bottom of the page, and click donate.

- Text your offering dollar amount to 717-259-2393.
- Use the GivePlus app from your smart phone or device.
- Set up regular electronic offerings by contacting Kevin, our office manager, at 717-766-2168, Monday through Thursday from 9am – 2pm, or by email at [office@ststephenlc.org](mailto:office@ststephenlc.org) to get set up.
- Mail in your check, made payable to St. Stephen Lutheran Church. Our address is 30 W. Main St., PO Box 266, New Kingstown, PA 17072.

The offerings are used to carry out the ministry of the church, to share the Good News, to provide pastoral care, to worship as a community, and to create an environment where Jesus encounters people and their lives are transformed. All of these things continue to take place. Thank you for your generosity.

\*Offertory Prayer

Let us pray. God of goodness and growth,  
all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song.

**Amen**

**Thanksgiving for the Word**

**Salvation belongs to our God  
and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.  
Great and wonderful are your deeds,**

**O God of the universe;  
just and true are your ways,  
O Ruler of all the nations.  
Who can fail to honor you, Lord,  
and sing the glory of your name?  
Salvation belongs to our God  
and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
and blessed is the one  
whose name is the Word of God.  
All praise and thanks to you, holy God!  
Salvation belongs to our God  
and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.**

Let us pray.

Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.**

## Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

### **\*Blessing**

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love.

**Amen.**

### **\*Sending Hymn**

*"Praise and Thanks and Adoration"*

Hymn#783

- 1 Praise and thanks and adoration,  
Son of God, to you we give,  
for you chose to serve creation,  
died that sinners all might live.  
Dear Lord Jesus, guide my way;  
faithful let me day by day  
follow where your steps are leading,  
find adventure, joys exceeding!
  
- 2 Hold me ever in your keeping,  
comfort me in pain and strife;  
through my laughter and my weeping,  
lift me to a nobler life.  
Draw my fervent love to you;  
constant hope and faith renew  
in your birth, your life and passion,  
in your death and resurrection.

Text: Thomas H. Kingo, 1634-1703; tr. Lutheran Book of Worship  
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### **\*Dismissal**

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

### **Postlude**

*"Adagio from Toccata Undecima"*

by Georg Muffat

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