

*St. Stephen Lutheran Church*  
*September 6, 2020*  
*Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

Conflict is a part of relationships and life in community. Jesus' words in today's gospel are often used in situations having to do with church discipline. The prophet Ezekiel tells of warning the wicked to turn from their ways, and Paul reminds us that love is the fulfilling of the law. We gather in the name of Christ, assured that he is present among us with gifts of peace and reconciliation.

Prelude

*"Trio"*

by Johann Ludwig Krebs

**Gathering**

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

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Faithful God,

**have mercy on us.**

**We confess that we are captive to sin  
and cannot free ourselves.**

**We turn from your loving embrace  
and go our own ways.**

**We pass judgment on one another  
before examining ourselves.**

**We place our own needs before those of our neighbors.**

**We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves.**

**Make us humble, cast away our transgressions,  
and turn us again to life in you**

**through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world.

**Amen.**

**Gathering Hymn**

*"Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven"*

Hymn#864 vs 1-3

- 1 Praise, my soul, the God of heaven;  
joyfully your tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
evermore God's praises sing.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praises everlasting ring!
- 2 God be praised for grace and favor  
to our forebears in distress.  
God be praised, the same forever,  
slow to chide and swift to bless.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Glorious is God's faithfulness!
- 3 Frail as summer's flow'r we flourish,  
blows the wind and it is gone;  
but, as mortals rise and perish,  
God endures unchanging on.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise the great Eternal One!

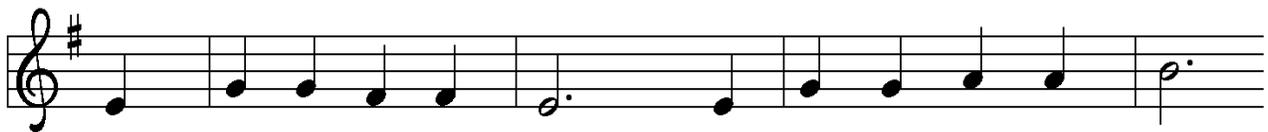
Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793-1847, alt. Walter R. Bouman, 1927-2005

**\*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 Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy. Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Word**

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

## The First Lesson

**Ezekiel 33:7-11**

*God appointed Ezekiel as a sentinel for the house of Israel. Ezekiel must faithfully convey God's warnings to the people. Remarkably, God—who is about to attack Jerusalem—gives a warning with the hope that repentance will make the attack unnecessary.*

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel, the 33rd chapter.

<sup>7</sup>So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. <sup>8</sup>If I say to the wicked, “O wicked ones, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. <sup>9</sup>But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

<sup>10</sup>Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: “Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?” <sup>11</sup>Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

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

### Psalm

**Psalm 119:33-40**

<sup>33</sup>Teach me, O LORD, the way | of your statutes,  
and I shall keep it | to the end.  
<sup>34</sup>**Give me understanding, and I shall | keep your teaching;  
I shall keep it with | all my heart.**  
<sup>35</sup>Lead me in the path of | your commandments,  
for that is | my desire.  
<sup>36</sup>**Incline my heart to | your decrees  
and not to | unjust gain.**  
<sup>37</sup>Turn my eyes from be- | holding falsehood;  
give me life | in your way.  
<sup>38</sup>**Fulfill your promise | to your servant,  
which is for | those who fear you.**  
<sup>39</sup>Turn away the reproach | that I dread,  
because your judg- | ments are good.  
<sup>40</sup>**Behold, I long for | your commandments;  
by your righteousness en- | liven me.**

### The Second Lesson

**Romans 13:8-14**

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

<sup>8</sup>Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup>The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>10</sup>Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

<sup>11</sup>Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; <sup>12</sup>the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; <sup>13</sup>let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and

licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

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 18:15-20**

*Jesus offers practical advice to his disciples on how individuals—and the church as a whole—should go about restoring relationships when one member has sinned against another.*

A reading from the Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 18th chapter. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>15</sup>“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. <sup>16</sup>But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup>Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

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

**Sermon**

Pastor Matthew Best

**\*Hymn of the Day**

*"Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether"*

Hymn#470 vs. 1,3

- 1 Draw us in the Spirit's tether,  
for when humbly in your name  
two or three are met together,  
you are in the midst of them.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Touch we now your garment's hem.
- 3 All our meals and all our living  
make as sacraments of you,  
that by caring, helping, giving,  
we may be disciples true.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
We will serve with faith anew.

Text: Percy Dearmer, 1867-1936, alt.

Text from *Songs of Praise* Enlarged Edition © Oxford University Press 1931.

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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:*

Lord, in Your mercy, **C: hear our prayer.**

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

Unite your church, O God. Grant us the gifts of repentance and reconciliation. Bless the cooperative work of churches in this community. Strengthen ecumenical partnerships; guide the work of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Protect your creation, O God. Teach us ways that do not harm what you have entrusted to our care. Renew and enliven places suffering from drought, flood, storms, or pollution. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Turn nations and leaders from ways that lead to death. Shape new paths toward peace and cooperation, teaching us to recognize one another as neighbors. Guide legislators, civil servants, judges, and police toward laws that protect the well-being of all. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Tend to all in need of your compassion. Hear the cries of those awaiting justice and those yearning for forgiveness. Give community to the lonely and neighbors to the outcast. Shelter all who are vulnerable in body, mind, or spirit. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Sustain us in our work, O God, and give work to those who need it. Shape societies to ensure fair treatment for all who labor. Help us to love our neighbors in and through our work. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We remember with thanksgiving those who have died in faith. As you equipped them, equip us with your protection and power, until with them we see your salvation. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord.  
**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. Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have set before us these gifts of your good creation. Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world, through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**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**

*“Lord, Dismiss Us With Your Blessing”*

Hymn#545

- 1 Lord, dismiss us with your blessing,  
fill our hearts with joy and peace;  
let us each, your love possessing,  
triumph in redeeming grace.  
Oh, refresh us; oh, refresh us,  
trav'ling through this wilderness.
- 2 Thanks we give and adoration  
for your gospel's joyful sound.  
May the fruits of your salvation  
in our hearts and lives abound.  
Ever faithful, ever faithful  
to your truth may we be found.
- 3 Savior, when your love shall call us  
from our struggling pilgrim way,  
let no fear of death appall us,  
glad your summons to obey.  
May we ever, may we ever  
reign with you in endless day.

Text: attr. John Fawcett, 1740-1817, sts. 1-2, alt.; Godfrey Thring, 1823-1903, st. 3, alt.

**\*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**

*“Little Postlude in G”*

by C.P.E. Bach  
arr. by Lani Smith

St. Stephen Evangelical Lutheran Church is a community of faith inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim boldly the Good News of God's loving and saving presence in the world.

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