

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
October 18, 2020
Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

In today's first reading God uses the Gentile ruler Cyrus to accomplish divine purposes. When the Pharisees try to trap Jesus, he tells them to give the emperor what belongs to him and to God what belongs to God. To gather for worship reminds us that our ultimate allegiance is to God rather than to any earthly authority. Created in the image of God, we offer our entire selves in the service of God and for the sake of the world.

Prelude

"Vater Unser im Himmelreich"

by Johann Sebastian Bach

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.



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.

Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Word

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

The First Lesson

Isaiah 45:1-7

The prophet announces that Cyrus the Persian emperor is the one the Lord has anointed to end Israel's exile. The Lord makes this choice so that the whole world will recognize this Lord as the only God. Persia had a god of light and a god of darkness; the Lord claims sovereignty over both light and darkness.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah, the 45th chapter.

- ¹Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped
to subdue nations before him
and strip kings of their robes,
to open doors before him—
and the gates shall not be closed:
²I will go before you
and level the mountains,
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut through the bars of iron,
³I will give you the treasures of darkness
and riches hidden in secret places,
so that you may know that it is I, the LORD,
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.
⁴For the sake of my servant Jacob,
and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name,
I surname you, though you do not know me.
⁵I am the LORD, and there is no other;
besides me there is no god.
I arm you, though you do not know me,
⁶so that they may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is no one besides me;
I am the LORD, and there is no other.
⁷I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe;
I the LORD do all these things.

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

Psalm

Psalm 96:1-13

- ¹Sing to the LORD | a new song;
sing to the LORD, | all the earth.
²**Sing to the LORD, bless the name | of the LORD;**
proclaim God's salvation from | day to day.
³Declare God's glory a- | mong the nations
and God's wonders a- | mong all peoples.

⁴**For great is the LORD and greatly | to be praised,
more to be feared | than all gods.**

⁵As for all the gods of the nations, they | are but idols;
but you, O LORD, have | made the heavens.

⁶**Majesty and magnificence are | in your presence;
power and splendor are in your | sanctuary.**

⁷Ascribe to the LORD, you families | of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD hon- | or and power.

⁸**Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the | holy name;
bring offerings and enter the courts | of the LORD.**

⁹Worship the LORD in the beau- | ty of holiness;
tremble before the LORD, | all the earth.

¹⁰**Tell it out among the nations: “The | LORD is king!
The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peo- | ples
with equity.”**

¹¹Let the heavens rejoice, and let the | earth be glad;
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that | is therein.

¹²**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your com- | ing, O LORD,
for you come to | judge the earth.**

¹³You will judge the | world with righteousness
and the peoples | with your truth.

The Second Lesson

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Most likely this letter is the first written by Paul. Paul gives pastoral encouragement and reassurances to new Christians living in an antagonistic environment. Their commitment of faith, love, and hope makes them a model for other new Christian communities.

A reading from Paul's 1st letter to the Thessalonians, the 1st chapter.

¹Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.

²We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly
³remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness
of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he
has chosen you, ⁵because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in
power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we
proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in
spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you
became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸For the word of the Lord
has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in
God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. ⁹For the people of those
regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God
from idols, to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised
from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

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 22:15-22

After Jesus begins teaching in the temple, religious leaders try to trap him with questions. First they ask if God's people should pay taxes to an earthly tyrant like Caesar.

The Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 22nd chapter. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap [Jesus] in what he said. ¹⁶So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" ¹⁸But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" ²¹They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." ²²When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

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

Sermon

Pastor Matthew Best

***Hymn of the Day**

"Lift Every Voice and Sing"

Hymn#841 vs. 3

3 God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
thou who hast by thy might led us into the light,
keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee;
lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee;
shadowed beneath thy hand may we forever stand,
true to our God, true to our native land.

Text: James W. Johnson, 1871-1938

***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:

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

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

A Brief Silence

Holy One, our church needs your guidance. We argue over policies and forget your mission for us. We forget You. Remind us of what is important. Be with the whole church, its leaders, its members, and those it serves, inspiring faith, love, and endurance and uplifting us to be an example to others; Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Creator God, this physical world needs you as well. We pray for an end to the rampant pollution and depletion of natural resources. Help us, instead, to notice and take joy in the simple gifts you give us each day, from the beauty of sunrise to the grandeur of sunset. Let our gratitude guide us to protect your creation; Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of peace, spark in us gifts of reconciliation. Daily we fight and speak words that divide. We are distracted by other gods. We need to sing a new song. Today we pray that all of us, leaders and citizens alike, might see the wisdom in speaking words of peace and partnership; Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Loving God, be with the poor, the oppressed, the sick, the bereaved, and the lonely. Hear their cries and guide us to be your hands in helping them; Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Healing Lord, go before all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, leveling the mountains that they face so that they might be healed. Fill them with the joy of the Holy Spirit. We especially pray for comfort and healing for [**insert names of those currently on prayer list**]; Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of love, be with this family of believers at St Stephen. As we seek your will for us through the R3 renewal process, as we adapt because of pandemic restrictions, and as we head into a new church year, walk with us and talk to us. We want to encounter You. Help us to avoid the traps of this world and to discern how to use our gifts and skills to further your work here on earth; Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for all who have died this last week and for all who mourn their passing. Bring comfort to the bereaved and salvation to the deceased. We also honor St Luke the Evangelist, a respected physician and artist who followed your call, including recording the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

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 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 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

The 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.

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 overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened 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:



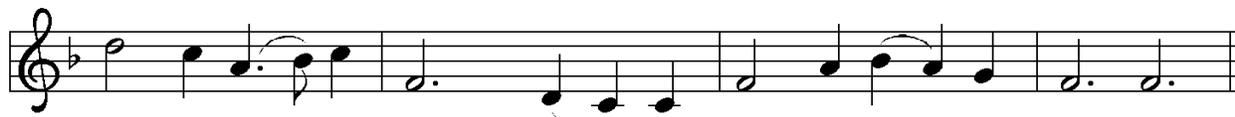
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -



san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Thanksgiving at the Table

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
you have brought us this far along the way.

In times of bitterness you did not abandon us,
but guided us into the path of love and light.

In every age you sent prophets
to make known your loving will for all humanity.

The cry of the poor has become your own cry;
our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.

In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant
to preach good news to the afflicted,
to break bread with the outcast and despised,
and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

In the night in which he was handed over,
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 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.

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection,
we await the day when Jesus shall return
to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.

Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen

Amen.

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate,
to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup
with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world.

Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen

Amen.

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age,
that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection,
we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and 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.

Invitation to Communion

Taste and see that the Lord is good.



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

The Body and Blood of our Lord broken and shed for you.

Post Communion Prayer

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us with food beyond compare, the body and blood of Christ. Lead us from this place, nourished and forgiven, into your beloved vineyard to wipe away the tears of all who hunger and thirst, guided by the example of the same Jesus Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **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**

"You Servants of God"

Hymn#825

- 1 You servants of God, your Master proclaim,
and publish abroad his wonderful name;
the name, all-victorious, of Jesus extol;
his kingdom is glorious and rules over all!
- 2 Ascended on high, almighty to save,
yet still he is nigh, his presence we have.
The great congregation his triumph shall sing,
ascribing salvation to Jesus, our king!
- 3 Salvation to God who sits on the throne!
Let all cry aloud and honor the Son.
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.
- 4 Then let us adore and give him his right,
all glory and pow'r and wisdom and might,
all honor and blessing, with angels above,
and thanks never ceasing, and infinite love!

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, 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

"Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus!"

arranged 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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