

*St. Stephen Lutheran Church*  
*March 7 2021*  
*Third Sunday in Lent*

The third covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the central one of Israel's history: the gift of the law to those God freed from slavery. The commandments begin with the statement that because God alone has freed us from the powers that oppressed us, we are to let nothing else claim first place in our lives. When Jesus throws the merchants out of the temple, he is defending the worship of God alone and rejecting the ways commerce and profit-making can become our gods. The Ten Commandments are essential to our baptismal call: centered first in God's liberating love, we strive to live out justice and mercy in our communities and the world.



Jesus answered them,  
“Destroy this temple,  
and in three days  
I will raise it up.”

*John 2:19*

## Gathering

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

### Prelude

*“Agnus Dei”*

by John Merbecke  
arranged by Craig Penfield

### \*Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer.

**Amen.**

God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

*Silence is kept for reflection*

Fountain of living water,

**pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free. Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love.**

**Amen.**

Beloved, God’s word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are ☩ forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus.

**Amen.**

### \*Gathering Hymn

*“In the Cross of Christ I Glory”*

Hymn#324, vs 2-4

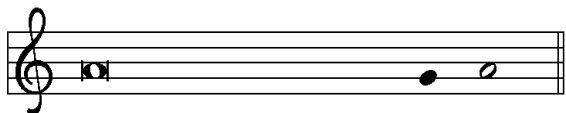
- 2 When the woes of life o’ertake me,  
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,  
never shall the cross forsake me;  
lo, it glows with peace and joy.
- 3 When the sun of bliss is beaming  
light and love upon my way,  
from the cross the radiance streaming  
adds more luster to the day.
- 4 Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,  
by the cross are sanctified;  
peace is there that knows no measure,  
joys that through all time abide.

Text: John Bowring, 1792-1872

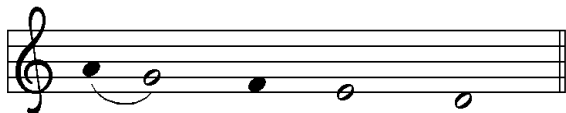
**\*Apostolic Greeting**

The boundless grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, and the light of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**\*Kyrie**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



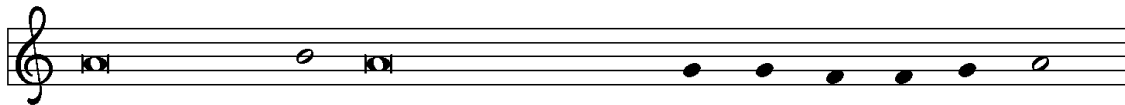
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

**\*Canticle of Praise**

Assisting minister



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, 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**

Let us pray.

Holy God, through your Son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach us the wisdom that comes only through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **Word**

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

## **The First Lesson**

**Exodus 20:1-17**

*After escaping from slavery, the Israelites come to Mount Sinai, where God teaches them how to live in community. The Ten Commandments proclaim that God alone is worthy of worship. Flowing from God, the life of the community flourishes when based on honesty, trust, fidelity, and respect for life, family, and property.*

A reading from the book of the Exodus, the 20th chapter.

<sup>1</sup>God spoke all these words:

<sup>2</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; <sup>3</sup>you shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>4</sup>You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, <sup>6</sup>but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>7</sup>You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

<sup>8</sup>Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work.

<sup>10</sup>But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

<sup>12</sup>Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>13</sup>You shall not murder.

<sup>14</sup>You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup>You shall not steal.

<sup>16</sup>You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup>You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

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

## Psalm

## Psalm 19

- <sup>1</sup>The heavens declare the glo- | ry of God,  
and the sky proclaims its | maker's handiwork.
- <sup>2</sup>**One day tells its tale | to another,  
and one night imparts knowledge | to another.**
- <sup>3</sup>Although they have no | words or language,  
and their voices | are not heard,
- <sup>4</sup>**their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends | of the world,  
where God has pitched a tent | for the sun.**
- <sup>5</sup>It comes forth like a bridegroom out | of his chamber;  
it rejoices like a champion to | run its course.
- <sup>6</sup>It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of | it again;  
nothing is hidden from its | burning heat.
- <sup>7</sup>The teaching of the LORD is perfect and re- | vives the soul;  
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to | the simple.
- <sup>8</sup>**The statutes of the LORD are just and re- | joice the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light | to the eyes.**
- <sup>9</sup>The fear of the LORD is clean and en- | dures forever;  
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous | altogether.
- <sup>10</sup>**More to be desired are they than gold, more than | much fine gold,  
sweeter far than honey, than honey | in the comb.**
- <sup>11</sup>By them also is your ser- | vant enlightened,  
and in keeping them there is | great reward.
- <sup>12</sup>**Who can detect one's | own offenses?  
Cleanse me from my | secret faults.**
- <sup>13</sup>Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion | over me;  
then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a | great offense.
- <sup>14</sup>**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable | in your  
sight,  
O LORD, my strength and | my redeemer.**

## The Second Lesson

## 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

*The word of the cross is pure foolishness and nonsense to the world because it claims that God is mostly revealed in weakness, humiliation, and death. But through such divine foolishness and weakness, God is working to save us. The center of Paul's preaching is Christ crucified.*

A reading from St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, the 1st chapter.

- <sup>18</sup>The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written,  
"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."
- <sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we proclaim

Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

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

**\*Gospel Acclamation**



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,  
slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

**\*The Holy Gospel**

**John 2:13-22**

*Jesus attacks the commercialization of religion by driving merchants out of the temple. When challenged, he responds mysteriously, with the first prediction of his own death and resurrection. In the midst of a seemingly stable religious center, Jesus suggests that the center itself has changed.*

A reading from the Gospel according to St. John, the 2nd chapter.

**Glory to You o Lord.**

<sup>13</sup>The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. <sup>15</sup>Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup>He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" <sup>17</sup>His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." <sup>18</sup>The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" <sup>19</sup>Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup>The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup>But he was speaking of the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup>After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

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

**Sermon**

Pastor Matthew Best

**\*Hymn of the Day**

*"Canticle of the Turning"*

Hymn#723

1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout  
that the God of my heart is great,  
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things  
that you bring to the ones who wait.  
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,  
and my weakness you did not spurn,  
so from east to west shall my name be blest.  
Could the world be about to turn?

*Refrain*

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.  
Let the fires of your justice burn.  
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,  
and the world is about to turn.

2 Though I am small, my God, my all,  
you work great things in me,  
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past  
to the end of the age to be.  
Your very name puts the proud to shame,  
and to those who would for you yearn,  
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,  
for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*

3 From the halls of pow'r to the fortress tow'r,  
not a stone will be left on stone.  
Let the king beware for your justice tears  
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.  
The hungry poor shall weep no more,  
for the food they can never earn;  
there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,  
for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*

4 Though the nations rage from age to age,  
we remember who holds us fast:  
God's mercy must deliver us  
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.  
This saving word that our forebears heard  
is the promise which holds us bound,  
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,  
who is turning the world around. *Refrain*

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat  
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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:*

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.*

Almighty God, We love you. In today's readings, we heard your ten commandments—your rules for living, and even though we have heard them many times before, we need to be reminded of them. We are thankful for these parameters to guide and keep our lives on track, on your path. Help us to abide by them and to abide in you, today and all the days of our lives. You are our one true God, and we have no other Gods. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Loving God, during this season of Lent, help us to reflect on the life of your Son Jesus Christ, sent into our broken world to heal and save us. Give us the strength, compassion and wisdom to share the love and light of Jesus to all we encounter. We pray for all Christian churches and missionaries striving to share the good news worldwide. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Infinite God, thank you for your abundant, beautiful, incredible creation. May we never lose our sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world. We pray for all the processes taking place in all living things as we approach the renewal that comes with spring. And may the coming spring season renew our hope and faith. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Awesome God, watch over the world and send wisdom to leaders of all types. We long for peace. We pray for all those affected by tragedy, wars and fighting, accidents, crime and hate. Let us be instruments of your peace and love. Help us always to demonstrate our love for you as our God and our love for others as our neighbors, upholding your two greatest commandments. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Healing God, please touch, with your healing hand, all those suffering in mind, body or spirit. Be with all those affected by sickness, disease, cancer, COVID-19, loneliness and broken hearts. Fill them with your love and wholeness. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, we pray for the poor and oppressed, the victimized and marginalized. Open our eyes to see them, to seek ways to help them, and to have hearts to love them. Please comfort, strengthen and nourish them. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we pray for all relationships. Strengthen and bless our marriages, friendships, family ties, neighborhood and community relationships, career and work relationships. We pray for all disciples of St. Stephen, church family relationships and the R3 team. Please continue to bless their work as they approach their final projects, and we pray that you lead St. Stephen into the next exciting phase of our ministry. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Meal**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

### **\*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 717-685-6947. Text "help" for options.

Use Engage from your smart phone or Internet connected device at <https://engage.suran.com/sslc/> or QR code below:



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.  
Faithful God,  
you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in this meal, that we may pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen**

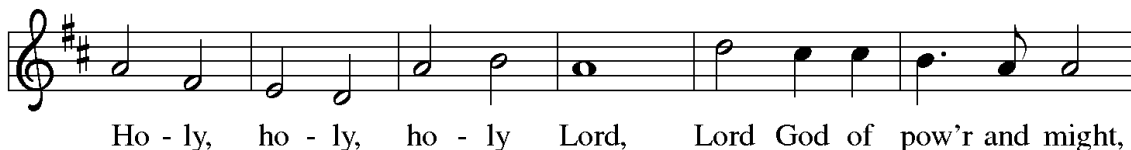
**\*The Great Thanksgiving**

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. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. 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:



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.

Blessed are you, O God of the universe.

Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age. Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth. Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood. Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea. Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey. Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one. Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ. Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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 for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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**

AM. Jesus draws the whole world to Himself.

Come and be fed



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.

### **\*Post Communion Prayer**

God of steadfast love, at this table you gather your people into one body for the sake of the world. Send us in the power of your Spirit, that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Sending**

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

### **\*Blessing**

You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you ☩ that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

**Amen.**

### **\*Sending Hymn**

*"Lift High the Cross"*

Hymn#660

#### *Refrain*

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim  
till all the world adore his sacred name.

- 1 Come, Christians, follow where our captain trod,  
our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God. *Refrain*
- 2 All newborn servants of the Crucified  
bear on their brows the seal of him who died. *Refrain*
- 3 O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,  
as thou hast promised, draw us all to thee. *Refrain*
- 4 So shall our song of triumph ever be:  
praise to the Crucified for victory! *Refrain*

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### **\*Dismissal**

AM: Christ is born! Go tell it on the mountain and everywhere.

**C: Thanks be to God. We Will**

### **Postlude**

*"Hilf, Gott, Dass Mirs Gelingt"*

by Johann Sebastian Bach

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