

*August 29, 2021*  
*Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost*



**ST. STEPHEN**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church

\*Congregation is invited to stand as able  
Please be aware that video cameras are in use during our hybrid (combined) Worship Service and that images are being shared with the online participants.

Jesus protests against human customs being given the weight of divine law, while the essence of God's law is ignored. True uncleanness comes not from external things, but from the intentions of the human heart. Last week Jesus told us "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (John 6:63). Now James says God has given us birth by the word of truth. We who were washed in the word when we were born in the font return to it every Sunday to ask God to create in us clean hearts.

**Our Mission**

We respond to Christ's love by feeding those who hunger in body, mind, and spirit.

**Prelude**

*"I am Trusting You, Lord Jesus"*

by Henry W. Baker  
arranged by Benjamin M. Culli

**Gathering**

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

**\*Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the God of manna, the God of miracles, the God of mercy. **Amen.**

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God, our provider,

**help us. It is hard to believe there is enough to share. We question your ways when they differ from the ways of the world in which we live. We turn to our own understanding rather than trusting in you. We take offense at your teachings and your ways. Turn us again to you. Where else can we turn?**

**Share with us the words of eternal life and feed us for life in the world. Amen.**

Beloved people of God: in Jesus, the manna from heaven, you are fed and nourished. By Jesus, the worker of miracles, there is always more than enough. Through Jesus, † the bread of life, you are shown God's mercy: you are forgiven and loved into abundant life. **Amen.**

**\*Gathering Hymn**

*"My God, How Wonderful Thou Art "*

Hymn#863 vs. 1,2,4

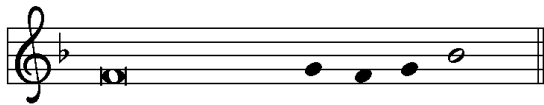
- 1 My God, how wonderful thou art,  
thy majesty how bright!  
How beautiful thy mercy seat  
in depths of burning light!
- 2 How wonderful, how beautiful  
the sight of thee must be--  
thine endless wisdom, boundless pow'r,  
and awesome purity!
- 4 Yet I may love thee too, O Lord,  
almighty as thou art,  
for thou hast stooped to ask of me  
the love of my poor heart.

Text: Frederick W. Faber, 1814-1863

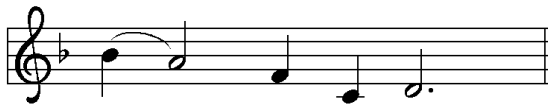
**\*Apostolic Greeting**

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.**

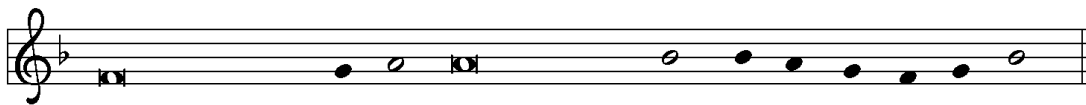
**\*Kyrie**



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.



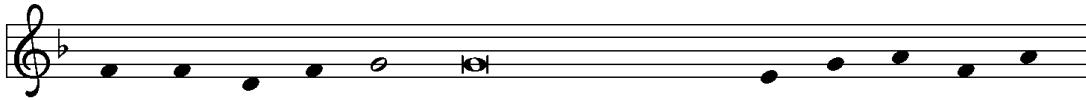
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of



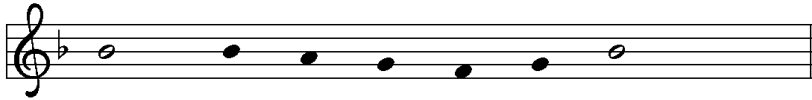
God, and for the uni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



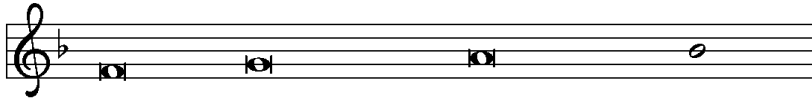
For this ho - ly house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and



praise, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gracious Lord.



A - men.

**\*Canticle of Praise**

*Refrain*



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace



to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the



high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



1 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.

*Refrain*



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace



to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the



high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



2 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.

*Refrain*



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace



to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the

high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

3 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.

*Final refrain*  
Glo - ry to God in the high - est.

A - men, a - men.

### **\*Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

O God our strength, without you we are weak and wayward creatures. Protect us from all dangers that attack us from the outside, and cleanse us from all evil that arises from within ourselves, that we may be preserved through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Word**

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

### **The First Lesson**

### **Song of Solomon 2:8-13**

*Though using language and images of a love story, the Song of Solomon has long been interpreted allegorically. Jewish lore sees it as a description of the love between God and Israel. Christians have often interpreted the Song as a description of the love between Christ and his church.*

A reading from the Song of Solomon, the 2nd chapter.

<sup>8</sup>The voice of my beloved!  
 Look, he comes,  
 leaping upon the mountains,  
 bounding over the hills.  
<sup>9</sup>My beloved is like a gazelle  
 or a young stag.  
 Look, there he stands  
 behind our wall,  
 gazing in at the windows,  
 looking through the lattice.  
<sup>10</sup>My beloved speaks and says to me:  
 "Arise, my love, my fair one,  
 and come away;  
<sup>11</sup>for now the winter is past,  
 the rain is over and gone.  
<sup>12</sup>The flowers appear on the earth;  
 the time of singing has come,  
 and the voice of the turtledove  
 is heard in our land.  
<sup>13</sup>The fig tree puts forth its figs,  
 and the vines are in blossom;  
 they give forth fragrance.  
 Arise, my love, my fair one,  
 and come away."

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

**Psalm**

**Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9**

<sup>1</sup>My heart is stirring with a noble song; let me recite what I have fashioned <sup>1</sup> for the king;  
 my tongue shall be the pen of a <sup>1</sup> skillful writer.  
<sup>2</sup>**You are the noblest a- <sup>1</sup>mong the people;**  
**grace flows from your lips, because God has blessed <sup>1</sup> you forever.**  
<sup>6</sup>Your throne, O God, endures forev- <sup>1</sup>er and ever,  
 a scepter of righteousness is the scepter <sup>1</sup> of your kingdom.  
<sup>7</sup>**You love righteousness and <sup>1</sup> hate iniquity;**  
**therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above <sup>1</sup> your**  
**companions.**  
<sup>8</sup>All your garments are fragrant with myrrh, al- <sup>1</sup>oes, and cassia,  
 and the music of strings from ivory palaces <sup>1</sup> makes you glad.  
<sup>9</sup>**Kings' daughters stand among the ladies <sup>1</sup> of the court;**  
**on your right hand is the queen, adorned with the <sup>1</sup> gold of Ophir.**

**The Second Lesson**

**James 1:17-27**

*The letter of James was intended to provide first-century Christians with instruction in godly behavior. Here Christians are encouraged to listen carefully and to act on what they hear, especially by caring for those least able to care for themselves.*

A reading from St. James' epistle, the 1st chapter.

<sup>17</sup>Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. <sup>18</sup>In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

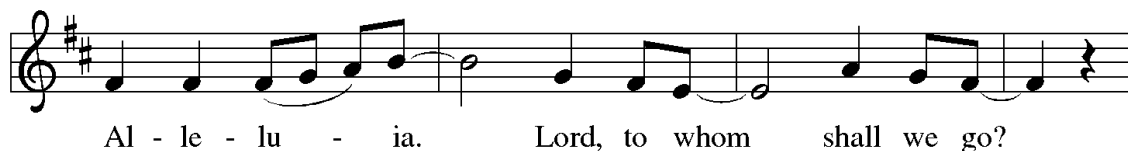
<sup>19</sup>You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup>for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. <sup>21</sup>Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

<sup>22</sup>But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. <sup>23</sup>For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. <sup>25</sup>But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

<sup>26</sup>If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup>Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

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

### Gospel Acclamation



### Gospel Reading

**Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

*Mark's gospel depicts Jesus as challenging traditional ways in which religious people determine what is pure or impure. For Jesus, the observance of religious practices cannot become a substitute for godly words or deeds that spring from a faithful heart.*

A reading from the Gospel according to St. Mark, the 7th chapter. **Glory to You O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], <sup>2</sup>they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. <sup>3</sup>(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; <sup>4</sup>and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) <sup>5</sup>So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?"

<sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips,

but their hearts are far from me;  
<sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me,  
 teaching human precepts as doctrines.’  
<sup>8</sup>You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”  
<sup>14</sup>Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand:  
<sup>15</sup>there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are  
 what defile.”  
<sup>21</sup>For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft,  
 murder, <sup>22</sup>adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. <sup>23</sup>All  
 these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

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

**Sermon**

The Reverend Matthew Best

**\*Hymn of the Day**

*“Lord, Let My Heart be Good Soil”*

Hymn#512

Lord, let my heart be good soil,  
 open to the seed of your word.  
 Lord, let my heart be good soil,  
 where love can grow and peace is understood.  
 When my heart is hard, break the stone away.  
 When my heart is cold, warm it with the day.  
 When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.  
 Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart,  
 Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Text: Handt Hanson, b. 1950  
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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 Intercession**

*Congregational response after each petition:*

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

Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

We pray for the church, that it is a safe haven for all who seek your presence. Fill it with pastors, deacons, and leaders who echo your expansive and generous welcome. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the whole of creation, that plants and animals have the habitat and resources to thrive and flourish. Inspire us to protect threatened habitats and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for individuals in positions of authority. Raise up wise and discerning leaders in federal, state, and local governments and guide them to seek the benefit of every person. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in need. Support and encourage those who are unemployed, underemployed, or experiencing poverty. Bring food, shelter, clothes, and stability for daily life. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this congregation, especially those beginning a new school year. Empower teachers and school administrators. Guide students in their learning and development. Accompany parents, foster parents, and caregivers who provide encouragement and love. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the faithful departed who showed us how to honor God with our heart. Inspire us by their example and renew our faith, trusting that we will be united with them in glory. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus 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 717-685-6947. 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. Jesus, Bread of life,  
you have set this table with your very self, and called us to the feast of plenty. Gather what has been sown among us, and strengthen us in this meal. Make us to be what we receive here, your body for the life of the world.

**Amen**

### **Meal**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

### **\*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. You reveal your glory as the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, one Lord, one God, ever to be adored in your eternal glory. 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, Lord God of pow - er and might,  
 heav - en 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.

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**Amen.**

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

**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**

Christ has set the table with more than enough for all.  
**Come!**

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.

Music: *Bread of Life*, Jeremy Young, b. 1948  
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**\*Post Communion Prayer**

Let us pray. Jesus, Bread of life,  
we have received from your table more than we could ever ask. As you have nourished us in  
this meal, now strengthen us to love the world with your own life. In your name we pray.  
**Amen.**

**Sending**

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

**\*Blessing**

The blessing of God, who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us, ☩ be upon you now  
and forever.

**Amen.**

**\*Sending Hymn**

*“For the Beauty of the Earth “*

Hymn#879 vs. 1,2,4

- 1 For the beauty of the earth,  
for the beauty of the skies,  
for the love which from our birth  
over and around us lies:

*Refrain*

Christ, our God, to thee we raise  
this our sacrifice of praise.

2 For the wonder of each hour  
of the day and of the night,  
hill and vale and tree and flow'r,  
sun and moon and stars of light: *Refrain*

4 For the joy of human love,  
brother, sister, parent, child,  
friends on earth and friends above;  
for all gentle thoughts and mild: *Refrain*

Text: Folliot S. Pierpoint, 1835-1917, alt.

**\*Dismissal**

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

*"Recessional"*

by Robert J Hughes

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