

August 7, 2022
The Ninth 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.

You can receive our weekly email/letter with events and information, ways to grow in faith, opportunities for service and worship, as well as ways to support the ministry of the congregation by submitting your email address to office@ststephenlc.org or by calling the office at 717-766-2168 and providing your email and/or your mailing address.

Jesus says, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." It is God's promise from the beginning—to Abraham, to the early church, and to the "little flock" of which we are a part in today's assembly. Faith, God's baptismal gift, trusts the promises of God. Have no fear.

Our Mission

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

Prelude

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 endures forever.
Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Merciful God,
we confess that we have not followed your path but have chosen our own way. Instead of putting others before ourselves, we long to take the best seats at the table. When met by those in need, we have too often passed by on the other side. Set us again on the path of life. Save us from ourselves and free us to love our neighbors.
Amen.

Hear the good news!
God does not deal with us according to our sins but delights in granting pardon and mercy. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. You are free to love as God loves. **Amen.**

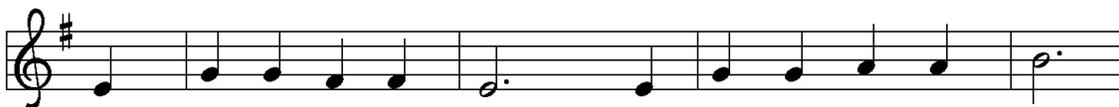
- 1 God, who stretched the spangled heavens
infinite in time and place,
flung the suns in burning radiance
through the silent fields of space:
we, your children in your likeness,
share inventive pow'rs with you;
great Creator, still creating,
show us what we yet may do.
- 2 We have ventured worlds undreamed of
since the childhood of our race;
known the ecstasy of winging
through untraveled realms of space;
probed the secrets of the atom,
yielding unimagined pow'r,
facing us with life's destruction
or our most triumphant hour.
- 3 As each far horizon beckons,
may it challenge us anew:
children of creative purpose,
serving others, hon'ring you.
May our dreams prove rich with promise;
each endeavor well begun;
great Creator, give us guidance
till our goals and yours are one.

Text: Catherine Cameron, b. 1927
Text © 1967 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.
Reprinted under One License #A735517

***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**



- 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.

Almighty God, you sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your church. Open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may be ready to receive you wherever you appear, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Word

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

The First Lesson

Genesis 15:1-6

God promises childless and aging Abram that a child of his own will be his heir and that his descendants will number as many as the stars. Abram trusts God's promise, and through this faith he is considered righteous.

A reading from the book of Genesis, the 15th chapter.

¹After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ²But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." ⁴But the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." ⁵He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness.

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

Psalm

Psalm 33:12-22

¹²Happy is the nation whose God ¹ is the LORD!
Happy the people chosen to ¹ be God's heritage!
¹³**The LORD looks ¹ down from heaven,
and sees all ¹ humankind.**
¹⁴God sits firmly en- ¹ throned and watches
all who dwell ¹ on the earth.
¹⁵**God fashions ¹ all their hearts
and observes ¹ all their deeds.**
¹⁶A king is not saved by the size ¹ of the army,
nor are warriors rescued by ¹ their great strength.
¹⁷**The horse gives vain ¹ hope for victory;
despite its great strength it ¹ cannot save.**
¹⁸Truly, your eye is upon those who fear ¹ you, O LORD,
upon those who wait for your ¹ steadfast love,
¹⁹**to deliver their ¹ lives from death,
and to keep them alive in ¹ time of famine.**
²⁰Our innermost being waits for ¹ you, O LORD,
our helper ¹ and our shield.
²¹**Surely, our heart rejoic- ¹ es in you,
for in your holy name we ¹ put our trust.**
²²Let your lovingkindness, O LORD, ¹ be upon us,
even as we place our ¹ hope in you.

The Second Lesson

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

Abraham and Sarah exemplify the vision of faith that people of God enact in every age. Their hope and trust in God's promise allowed them to face an unknown future and to receive the promise of God.

A reading from the epistle to the Hebrews, the 11th chapter.

¹Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ²Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. ³By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered himself faithful who had promised. ¹²Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, “as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.”

¹³All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, ¹⁴for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them

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**

Luke 12:32-40

Jesus encourages disciples to invest their hearts and live fully into God's reign. Instead of facing life with fear, those who know God's generosity are always ready to receive from God and to give to others.

A reading from the Gospel according to St. Luke, the 12th chapter. **Glory to You O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] ³²“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

³⁵“Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; ³⁶be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. ³⁷Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

³⁹“But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.”

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

Sermon

Rev. Matthew Best

***Hymn of the Day**

“Have No Fear, Little Flock”

Hymn#764

- 1 Have no fear, little flock;
 have no fear, little flock,
 for the Father has chosen
 to give you the kingdom;
 have no fear, little flock!

- 2 Have good cheer, little flock;
 have good cheer, little flock,
 for the Father will keep you
 in his love forever;
 have good cheer, little flock!

- 3 Praise the Lord high above;
 praise the Lord high above,
 for he stoops down to heal you,
 uplift and restore you;
 praise the Lord high above!

- 4 Thankful hearts raise to God;
 thankful hearts raise to God,
 for he stays close beside you,
 in all things works with you;
 thankful hearts raise to God!

Text: Luke 12:32, st. 1; Marjorie Jilson, b. 1931, sts. 2-4

Text © 1973 Concordia Publishing House

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

Text reprinted under One License #A735517

***Apostle's Creed**

AM: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us profess our faith, using the words of the Apostle's 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.**

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.

Creator God, On this first Sunday in August, we pray for the church universal, for the hearts of your faithful people worldwide to be rekindled and inspired anew, filled with your love and ready to do your good work. We pray this over all Christian churches and missionaries across the globe. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, thank you for the summer season, this time of growth for all living things, animals and plants, forests and fields, crops and gardens, rivers and oceans, as well as children of all ages. Bless all those traveling with safe, enjoyable vacations, and bring them back home safely, renewed and inspired. We are thankful for all farmers raising, producing and harvesting healthy food filled with nutrients. Turn our country away from processed food and unhealthy eating habits, and toward fresh, colorful and natural fruits and vegetables that you have provided for the nourishment of our bodies. May we be good stewards of your creation always. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Healing God, we pray for solutions to big problems plaguing our world right now: the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, wildfires and other natural disasters, and the war in Ukraine. Help peace and love to overtake hate and ugliness, racism and anger. Send wisdom to all those in positions of leadership and guide them with your Holy Spirit to make decisions that will spark positive, caring actions and solutions. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of wonder, we pray for all students and families preparing for college semesters and new school years. Bless all teachers, professors and educational leaders at schools and universities. May they begin the upcoming school year with a renewed zest for learning and teaching. We especially pray for all educators, students and families hurting and healing from school shootings. May your Holy Spirit fill them with peace. And God we ask you to bless believers of all ages with a joy of lifelong learning. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of grace, we pray for all the disciples of St. Stephen—those who are in the church sanctuary today, those who are joining us on Zoom or Facebook, and those who cannot be present in worship today. May your Holy Spirit unite us in our mission, to share the good news of Jesus, and to feed those who hunger in body, mind, and spirit. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all friends, family and community members who are sick or hospitalized, battling diseases of the mind, body and spirit. We pray for all families touched by COVID-19 deaths and illnesses such as long-haul COVID. Thank you for all doctors and nurses, medical researchers, and all those called into medical professions. Guide them with your wisdom, to care for your people. We are especially grateful for innovative researchers working on cures for cancer, vaccines and treatments. May your Holy Spirit intercede and touch all those who need healing. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, send your Holy Spirit to guide us through the week ahead with a renewed sense of purpose. Help us to shine, to share the light and love of Jesus, in all we do. 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 click on the DONATE button (or the Giving tab for more options.) Text your offering dollar amount to 717-685-6947. Text "help" for options.

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.

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



Via PayPal: Enter PayPal@StStephenLC.org and then the amount you want to pay. . Use "Add a note" to provide designation (otherwise, it will go to the General Fund).



Select giving fund(s) and enter amount(s).
Furnish any additional information in "Gift Memo" box on the submit screen.

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 abundance:
you have set before us a plentiful harvest. As we feast on your goodness, strengthen us to labor in your field, and equip us to bear fruit for the good of all, in the name of Jesus.

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, 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.

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**

In Christ's presence there is fullness of joy.
Come to the banquet.



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.

***Post Communion Prayer**

Let us pray. Life-giving God,
through this meal you have bandaged our wounds and fed us with your mercy. Now send us
forth to live for others, both friend and stranger, that all may come to know your love. This we
pray in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

Sending

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

***Blessing**

The God of peace,
Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you, comfort you, and show you the path of life this day
and always. **Amen.**

***Sending Hymn**

"Blessed Assurance"

Hymn #638

- 1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Refrain

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior, all the day long:
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.

- 2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. *Refrain*
- 3 Perfect submission, all is at rest;
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love. *Refrain*

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820-1915

***Dismissal**

Go in peace. Love your neighbor.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2022 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.
Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #43258.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved