



St. Stephen Lutheran Church

Love God, Love People, Form Faith.

One of 13,000 Stephen Ministry Congregations Around the World

We believe that community is beautiful and messy and fulfilling and conflicted and...the POINT. God calls us together into community for the sake of one another, our neighbors, and creation. We don't always get it right, but we trust that when we center the love and grace that Jesus taught, we will get it right more often than not.

You are welcome here! We don't expect perfect, put-together people; we don't want you to conform to us and our ways; we want you to show up as who you are and to experience the love and grace of God as we have experienced it. And we hope that once you do, you will join us in sharing it with others too.

Sept 6 , 2026
15th Sunday after Pentecost

For Your Prayers - August 30- September 6, 2026

Lectionary readings for this week:

Mon – Sep 7: Leviticus 4:27-31; 5:14-16 | Peter 2:11-17 | Psalm 119:65-72

Tue – Sep 8: Deuteronomy 17:2-13 | Romans 13:1-7 | Psalm 119:65-72

Wed – Sep 9: Leviticus 16:1-5, 20-28 | Matthew 21:18-22 | Psalm 119:65-72

Thu – Sep 10: Genesis 37:12-36 | John 3:11-16 | Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13

Fri – Sep 11: Genesis 41:53—42:17 | Acts 7:9-16 | Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13

Sat – Sep 12: Genesis 45:1-20 | Matthew 6:7-15 | Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13

Next Sunday: Genesis 50:15-21 | Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13 (8) | Romans 14:1-12 | Matthew 18:21-35

Join your prayers for healing with God's desires for **Kristin Carter, Ginny Cummings, Craig Eichfeld, Edith Haecker, Dave Hoyer, Jim Ivey, Sharon Jacobs, Marilyn Johnson, Donna Kittelson, Terri Larsen, Carole Meyer, Gayle Spencer, and Charles Osborn.**

Pray for those unable to come to worship: **Ailene Bartlett, Ed Brown, Pat Janot, Marilyn Johnson, Jon Lund, Darlene Simon, and Kay Wasaff.**

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: Bob Alt, Thomas Alt, Randy Altona, Phyllis Andrews, Sam Areheart, Philip Baker, Bob Bastian, Carol Baum, Robi Bayard, Lila Bradley, Carol Bergh, Mary Bloom, Doug Bolick, Robert Bunn, David Carr, John Coski, Amaree Cluff, Judy Craun, Ronnie Dodson, Pat D'Orazio, Dru Dowdy, Judy Drezek, Anne Dwiggins, Bob Friend, Danny Gass, Debbie Glenn, Joan Goodhart, Charee Hampton, Sue Hassan and family, Andy Havola, Nick Havola, Bradley, Kim, Joan and Laurie Heintzelman, Char Henry, Henry Hespenheide, Lisa Hill, Doris Hillenbrand, Michelle Holdsworth, Jaxon Ireland, Don Johnson, Connie Kendrick, Jenn Kramer, Bob Loubach, Pat Layton, Marnah Lund, Doug MacKenzie, Keara Mahony, Trish Macerelli, Laura Margolin, Barry and Mabel Martin, Ellen Martin, Mabel Mater, Jackie Mazzone, Jimmy Mitchell, Carolyn Money maker Marian Mongelli, Liz Montalvo, Chuckie Moore, Bob Myers, Jeanette Osborn, Rodger Osborn, Maricel Paulin, Dima Pavlenko, Lloyd Peppard, Coral Pumley, Scott Radley, Kurt Recktenwald, Paula Rega, Carol Sue Repass, Brian Ritter, Ruth Sandoval, Lou Schuster, Pamela Sharp, Kelsey Slay, Valerie Smith, Vasili Soultoukis, Laura Spencer, Charlie Stayton, Chad Strausbaugh, John Steigerwalt, Al Stern, Monika Stern, Lara Templin, Lenorah Thomas, Karli Wallace Thompson, Betty Lou Tulloh, Elaine Wrich, Lynda Wright, and Bev Utrich.

15th Sunday after Pentecost

I. Gathering: *The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God*

Welcome

Litany of Praise for Creation

Glory to you, O God:

you speak a word of power,
and so you create the world.

We praise you, O God: **We praise you, O God.**

For the Spirit hovering to bring forth life,
for the earth ordered from chaos,
and for light and dark,
we bless you, O God: **We bless you, O God.**

For the cosmos beyond our earth,
for the sky above our heads,
and for the cycle of evening and morning,
we exalt you, O God: **We exalt you, O God.**

For the seas, the lakes, and the rivers,
for the land with its mountains and plains,
and for the trees, the plants, and their fruits,
we magnify you, O God: **We magnify you, O God.**

For the sun to rule the day,
for the moon to brighten the night,
and for the shining stars,
we extol you, O God: **We extol you, O God.**

For the fish in the sea,
for the birds of the air,
and for the monsters in the deep,
we glorify you, O God: **We glorify you, O God.**

For wild animals and creatures of all kinds,
for cattle and all livestock,
and for everything that creeps on the earth,
we adore you, O God: **We adore you, O God.**

For humankind made in your image,
for setting us on your good earth,
and for providing us food to eat,
we worship you, O God: **We worship you, O God.**

Bless us, your creatures.

Accept our praise,
and make us worthy of your marvelous
creation.

We praise you, O God: **We praise you, O God.**

Blessing and glory and wisdom and
thanksgiving
and honor and power and might
be to you, our God, forever and ever.
Amen. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn

Come All You People

ELW 819

Bulletin page 10

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**

Hymn of Praise

1 Let all things now liv - ing a song of thanks - giv - ing to
2 God rules all the forc - es: the stars in their cours - es and

God the cre - a - tor tri - um - phant - ly raise,
sun in its or - bit o - be - dient - ly shine;

who fash - ioned and made us, pro - tect - ed and stayed us, who
the hills and the moun - tains, the riv - ers and foun - tains, the

still guides us on to the end of our days.
deeps of the o - cean pro - claim God di - vine.

God's ban - ners are o'er us, God's light goes be -
We too should be voic - ing our love and re -

fore us, a pil - lar of fire shin - ing forth in the night,
joic - ing; with glad ad - o - ra - tion a song let us raise

till shad - ows have van - ished and dark - ness is ban - ished, as
till all things now liv - ing u - nite in thanks - giv - ing: "To

for - ward we trav - el from light in - to light.
God in the high - est, ho - san - na and praise!"

Prayer the Day

O God, in whom we live and move and have our being, in Christ you created the worlds, and your Spirit breathes life into the universe. We praise you for your wondrous creation. Bless us and all your handiwork with your infinite light, and direct our lives to the care of this good earth, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

II. Word: *God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and son*

Genesis 2 tells the beginning of the story of God's garden and includes several ambivalent foreshadowings: appreciation of the gold of other lands, the combination of dust and spirit in the creation of humanity, the call to the human to "serve and protect" the garden, the introduction of healthy ecological limits that might be transgressed, and beautiful partnerships formed between humans and other creatures that are vulnerable to being violated. Both profound goodness and fragile mortality are evident in the beginning—and both call for reverent attention today.

^{4b} In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵ when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no vegetation of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground, ⁶ but a stream would rise from the earth and water the whole face of the ground—⁷ then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. ⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰ A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, ¹² and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. ¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." ¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." ¹⁹ So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of the air and to every animal of the field, but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." ²⁴ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

*Reader: The Word of the Lord. Response: **Thanks be to God.***

Reading**Acts 17:22a, 24-28**

In Athens, Paul faces the challenge of proclaiming the gospel to Greeks who know nothing of either Jewish or Christian tradition. He proclaims that the "unknown god" whom they worship is the true Lord of heaven and earth who will judge the world with justice through Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead.

^{22a} Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, ²⁴ “The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one ancestor he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷ so that they would search for God and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we, too, are his offspring.’

*Reader: The Word of the Lord. Response: **Thanks be to God.***

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel

John 1:1-5

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

*Response after announcement of the Gospel: **Glory to you, O Lord.***

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

*Response at the conclusion of the Gospel: **“Praise to you, O Christ.”***

Sermon

Ancient Mysteries and Everyday Mission

Pastor Jon Nelson

Hymn of the Day

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

ELW 656

Bulletin page 11

Prayers

*Each petition concludes: Merciful God, **receive our prayer.***

III. Meal: God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

Offering Invitation

Beloveds, we remember that even in times of difficulty, we are held in the care of the earth. In gratitude for the trees that help us breathe, the water that replenishes, the beauty that revives, and all the gifts of this enduring creation, let us bring our offerings to God.

Offering of Music:

Because He Lives

William & Gloria Gaither

Soloist, Sandy Croushore

Offertory Prayer

Loving Creator, you mourn with us over all that is being destroyed. Each life is precious in your sight. Each creature and creation, a Sacred testament to you. As we offer our thanks for what sustains us, we bring, too, our grief, our tears, and our distress. As a practice of love, we pray, we weep, and we labor for change. **Amen.**

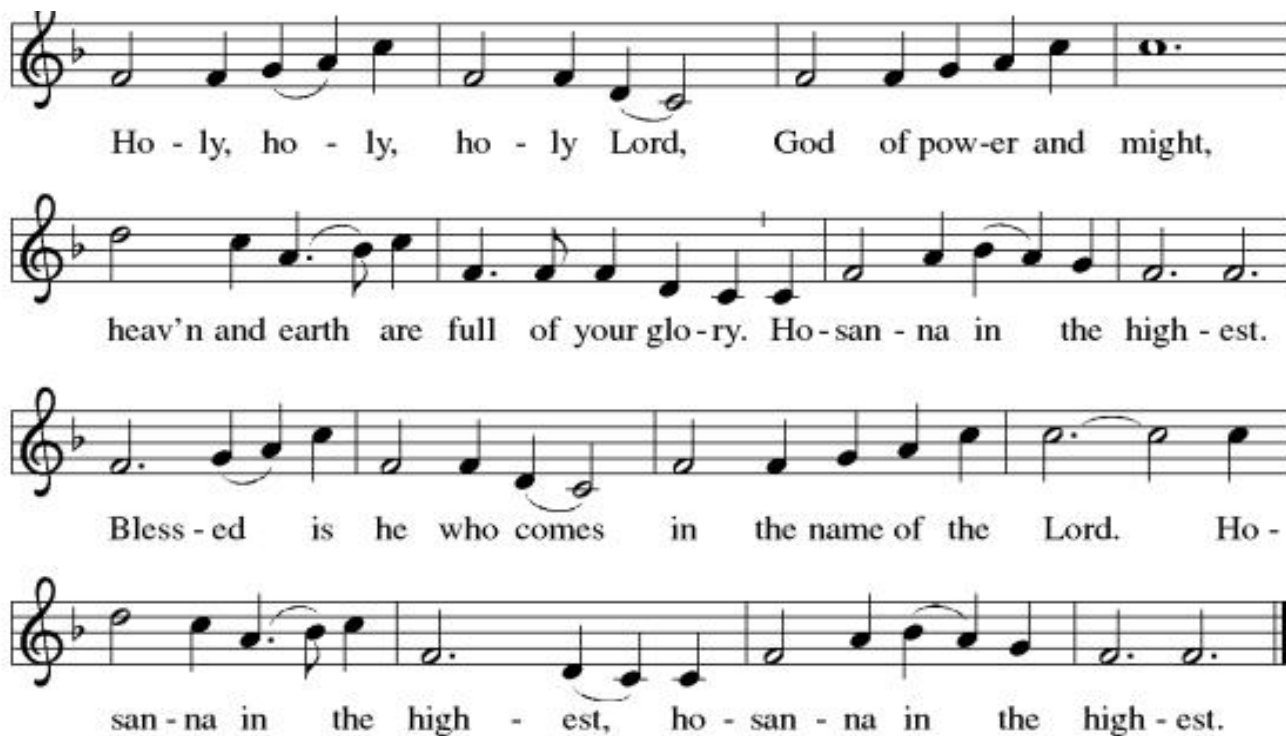
The Great Thanksgiving

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.

Words of Institution

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Holy Communion *When receiving Communion, either stand or kneel at the Rail. Pastor will distribute the bread and a Communion Assistant will come with a tray of pre-filled cups of wine and grape juice. The juice will be in the middle of the tray. Gluten-free wafers are available as an alternative to bread. All are welcome to the Lord's Supper.*



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.

Communion Music

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Soloist, Sandy Croushore

Communion Hymn

Bind Us Together

WOV 748

Bulletin page 12

Table Blessing

Prayer after Communion

God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing of the Backpacks

III. Sending: God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

Sending Hymn

Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises

ELW 535

Bulletin page 13

Blessing

Creator God bless you and keep you. Creating Christ shine through you with grace and mercy. Creative Spirit nourish you and give you peace Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Flourish with creation. Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Come, All You People

Uyaimose

U - ya - i - mo - se, ti - na - ma - te Mwa - ri;
 1 Come, all you peo - ple, come and praise the Most High;
 2 Come, all you peo - ple, come and praise the Sav - ior;
 3 Come, all you peo - ple, come and praise the Spir - it;

u - ya - i - mo - se, ti - na - ma - te Mwa - ri;
 come, all you peo - ple, come and praise the Most High;
 come, all you peo - ple, come and praise the Sav - ior;
 come, all you peo - ple, come and praise the Spir - it;

u - ya - i - mo - se, ti - na - ma - te Mwa - ri;
 come, all you peo - ple, come and praise the Most High;
 come, all you peo - ple, come and praise the Sav - ior;
 come, all you peo - ple, come and praise the Spir - it;

u - ya - i - mo - se Zvi - no.
 come now and wor - ship the Lord.
 come now and wor - ship the Lord.
 come now and wor - ship the Lord.

Text: Alexander Gondo; tr. I-to Loh, b. 1936, alt.

Music: UYAIMOSE, Alexander Gondo

Text and music © 1986 World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland and the Asian Institute of Liturgy & Music.

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system contains four staves of music, each with a vocal line and a corresponding line of lyrics. The second system contains two staves of music, each with a vocal line and a corresponding line of lyrics. The music is characterized by simple, homophonic chords and a steady, hymn-like melody. The lyrics are printed in a clear, serif font below the vocal lines.

1 Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Chris - tian love;
2 Be - fore our Fa - ther's throne we pour our ar - dent prayers;
3 We share our mu - tual woes, our mu - tual bur - dens bear,
4 From sor - row, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free;

the u - ni - ty of heart and mind is like to that a - bove.
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our com - forts and our cares.
and of - ten for each oth - er flows the sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.
and per - fect love and friend - ship reign through all e - ter - ni - ty.

Text: John Fawcett, 1740–1817, alt.
Music: DENNIS, Johann G. Nägeli, 1773–1836, adapt.

Bind Us Together

F/A

I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak. – Ezekiel 34:16

Bind us to - geth - er, Lord; Bind us to - geth - er with cords that

The first system of music is written for a treble and bass clef in 3/4 time. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "Bind us to - geth - er, Lord; Bind us to - geth - er with cords that".

can - not be bro - ken. Bind us to - geth - er, Lord; Bind us to -

The second system of music continues the melody and bass line. The lyrics are: "can - not be bro - ken. Bind us to - geth - er, Lord; Bind us to -".

FINE

geth - er, Lord, Bind us to - geth - er with love.

The third system of music continues the melody and bass line. The lyrics are: "geth - er, Lord, Bind us to - geth - er with love.".

There is on - ly one God. There is on - ly one King.

The fourth system of music continues the melody and bass line. The lyrics are: "There is on - ly one God. There is on - ly one King.".

D.C. al FINE

There is on - ly one bod - y, That is why we can sing:

The fifth system of music continues the melody and bass line. The lyrics are: "There is on - ly one bod - y, That is why we can sing:".

Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises

Haleluya! Pelo tsa rona

Refrain— sung twice each time



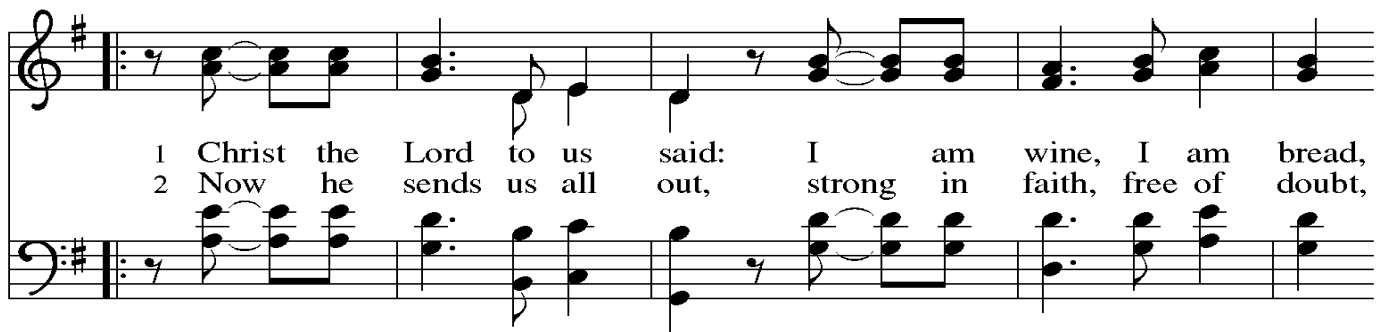
Ha - le - lu - ya! Pe - lo tsa ro - na, di tha -
Hal - le - lu - jah! We sing your prais - es, all our



bi - le ka - o - fe - la. Ha - le - lu - ya! Pe - lo tsa
hearts are filled with glad - ness. Hal - le - lu - jah! We sing your

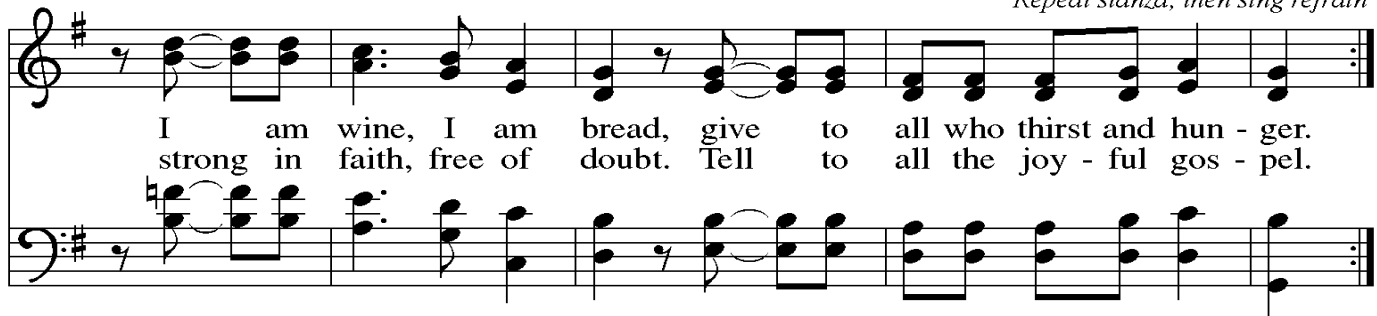


ro - na, di tha - bi - le ka - o - fe - la. *End*
prais - es, all our hearts are filled with glad - ness.



1 Christ the Lord to us said: I am wine, I am bread,
2 Now he sends us all out, strong in faith, free of doubt,

Repeat stanza, then sing refrain



I am wine, I am bread, give to all who thirst and hun - ger.
strong in faith, free of doubt. Tell to all the joy - ful gos - pel.

Text: South African; tr. *Freedom Is Coming*, 1984

Music: HALELUYA! PELO TSA RONA, South African; arr. *Freedom Is Coming*

English text and arr. © 1984 Utryck, admin. Walton Music Corp.

As We Gather **What's Happening Today**

Flowers this morning are given by Chris and Randy Punchard for this beautiful day.

Thank you to Jim Larsen, Marj Gottschalk-Trone for lending us their talents.

New Member Welcome: We will have a new member welcome at the end-of-summer church picnic on Sunday, September 6th, at Freedom Park.

Information & Upcoming

Dining Small Groups Are Back After a Break: Sign Up Now For The Next Round Consisting of about 7-9 people, each dining group will set its own "approach" for meals, such as: dinner out, brunch or lunch at a group member's house, potluck after Sunday worship, take-out, picnic, etc. Do whatever works best for the group! Each group is asked to meet three times between late September and the end of January. Of course you are free to meet more often if that works for your group. Call the church office; the **deadline to sign up is Sept. 20**. Contact Alison Carney or Diane McCurry with questions.

"Celebrating Ordinary" Fall Women's Workshop: Registration Coming in September

The St. Stephen Fall Women's Workshop, "Celebrating Ordinary," is being planned as a one-day event at St. Stephen on Saturday, November 7, with a Friday evening social the evening before, November 6. The Saturday workshop sessions will have spiritual themes and highlight relevancies to women's daily lives. The planning team is creating breakout sessions now - let Sandy Johnson know if you are interested in helping with a breakout session! Registration is coming in September, with details on the workshop. Thanks to Sandy Johnson and the planning team for their preparations. Come and bring a friend for the day Saturday, or Friday evening, or better yet - both! (Note: This annual St. Stephen women's event was formerly known as the Fall Women's Retreat; the planning team has renamed it the Fall Women's Workshop to better reflect its format.)

Women's and Men's Breakfast:

Tuesday, September 8 – Women are invited to join together for breakfast.

Thursday, September 10 – Men are invited to join together for breakfast.

Both gatherings take place at 8:00 a.m. on the first full week of the month at the Colonial Pancake House, at the corner of Page Street and Penniman Road, Williamsburg, VA. The get-togethers promote conversation and friendship in a casual setting.

St. Stephen Calendar: September 6-13 , 2026

SUNDAY, Sept 6~ 15th Sunday after Pentecost

9:45 AM Worship – Communion (*Freedom park*)

11:00 AM Picnic in the park following service

MONDAY, Sept 7

Preschool and church CLOSED

TUESDAY, Sept 8

8:00 AM Women's Breakfast (Colonial Pancake house)

12:30 PM Church Staff Meeting

WEDNESDAY, Sept 9

8:55 AM Yoga (Gathering space)

7:00 PM Chancel Choir Practice (Worship Space)

7:00 PM Girl scouts (Preschool big room)

7:00 PM AA meeting (Fellowship Hall)

THURSDAY, Sept 10

8:00 AM Men's Breakfast (Colonial Pancake house)

5:30 PM St. Stephen Ringers (Worship Space)

FRIDAY, Sept 11

SATURDAY, Sept 12

5:30 PM AA Meeting (Library/Conference room)

5:30 PM Al-Anon (Gathering Space)

SUNDAY, Sept 13~ "Gods Work Our Hands"

8:00 AM Matins Choir Warm-up (Worship Space)

8:30 AM Worship – Communion (*livestreamed on our YouTube channel*)

9:45 AM Matins (Worship Space)

10:30 AM Chancel Choir Warm-up (Worship Space)

11:00 AM Worship – Communion (*livestreamed on Facebook*)

6:00 PM LSA Dinner (College room)

Leading our Worship and Hospitality Today

Altar Guild.....(9:45) Carol Wiers
Audio-Visual Team.....(9:45) Tim Judy & David Nelson
Bread Baker Heidi Flatin
Cantor(9:45) Sandy Croushore
Communion Assistants.....(9:45)
Flower Delivery..... Diane McCurry
Greeters/Hosts(9:45) Chris Punchard
Lectors Ursula Recktenwald and Cyndy Touhasaent
Pastor John Nelson
Tellers Jane Gingerich, Ursula Recktenwald and Russ White
Ushers(9:45) Glenn Joppa



Did you enjoy our service this morning? If so, please consider donating to our general fund by scanning the QR code. This helps us with various ministries in our community and abroad. Thank You!

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
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Love God, Love People, Form Faith.
(St. Stephen Lutheran Church Vision Statement)

All of Us, Called Through Our Baptisms

Pastor Jon Nelson (320-295-8861)
Karen Ives – Director of Music (757-229-6688)
Hollie Jones – Parish Administrator (229-6688)
Jessica Kimball – Preschool Director (229-6688)
LSA Pastor Gerry Johnson(703)209-3599
pastorgfj@gmail.com

Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center (873-2273; counselors are in Williamsburg on Thursdays)

Doing Ministry in the World

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