

Letter writing is becoming a lost art in our culture. Our children may not even recognize Paul's writings as letters but as seemingly long-winded essays.

Philemon gives us a chance to talk about letter writing and putting our thoughts in writing. Try sitting together and writing some of these letters:

A letter to yourself at the end of this school year. *Was the year as exciting as I had hoped it would be? What did you learn? Who are the new friends you made? How did you change over the year and did any of your friendships change or other thoughts or questions.* Then put the letter in a safe place and take it out at the end of the year—or maybe more often—to think about the questions.

A letter to a teacher telling the teacher something about yourself that you think they should know.

A letter to a grandparent or other beloved relative to ask questions about their life, what was it like when their children were born, what hopes did they have for their life and how has it all worked out? What things do they want to tell you about life and what is important in life?

You can also try looking at this idea another way: take a letter and turn it into a few text messages. Try it with Paul's letter to Philemon and then try tackling 1 Corinthians 13 or some of Paul's other letters.

SAINT STEPHENS

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SEPTEMBER 7, 2025 | 9:00 AM | THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU ARE ON
LIFE'S JOURNEY, YOU'RE WELCOME HERE!

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

We do not have Sunday School during the summer months. During the Time for All Ages, children will receive a snack and an activity sheet.

Use the bookmarks available to mark the pages for today's hymns. Go through the bulletin with your children and circle the things in which they might be interested (Children's time, hymns, helping with the offering). Mark the bulletin with symbols for when it is time to be quiet and listen, join in the hymn, read a prayer aloud, etc.

Busy Bags are available in the church entryway. Quite often, children can absorb what is going on in church if their hands are occupied and their minds do not have to focus so much on "behaving." It takes a great deal of energy and concentration for a child to stay quiet and still. Please use the busy bags to occupy their hands so they are free to listen. Nudge them when it is time for a hymn and ask them to sing along with you. Encourage them to come forward for the *Time for All Ages* and to participate in presenting the offering.

POINTS TO PONDER PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, 18th century

"I cannot say whether things will get better if we change; what I can say is that they must change if they are to get better."

Quick and Easy Electronic Giving!!

To give an offering one time to the church, to a special offering, or to set up regular giving, text **"SAINTSTEPHENS" to 73256** to give using your mobile device. This number will never send unsolicited texts to you. To cancel further messages, text STOP. If you need assistance with text giving, text HELP. Standard text message and data rates may apply. **OR Scan the QR Code** to be connected to our website.



Stay in the loop!

Sign up for text alerts to stay updated on all upcoming events and church news. To join, text "Join" and your email to 715-255-1232.

*BENEDICTION

As our worship service ends, our worship through service begins anew. The peace of God which passes all understanding, Keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and the blessing of God almighty, the Savior and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.

*BENEDICTION

"There's Bread for the Journey"

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***There's bread for the journey and friends for the way,
There's hope for tomorrow and love for today.
The cup of forgiveness, all blessings release,
To heal and renew us and bring us God's peace.***

O Holy Spirit bind us together, now.

O Holy Spirit, bring us your peace. (2x)

POSTLUDE

THANK YOU!

Musicians today are Darlene Johnson and Tiffany Bucheger.

Radio Ministry is in honor of grandchildren Brandon, Wyatt and Lydia, from Dennis & Ione Koehler.

Livestream is sponsored by Bill & Paula McIntyre. They are in celebration of Bill's birthday on September 4, in celebration of our 30th wedding anniversary on September 9, and in celebration of and thanksgiving for the Staats and Sholund memorial scholarships.

Technical Director: Jody Meyer and Corey Dornbrack

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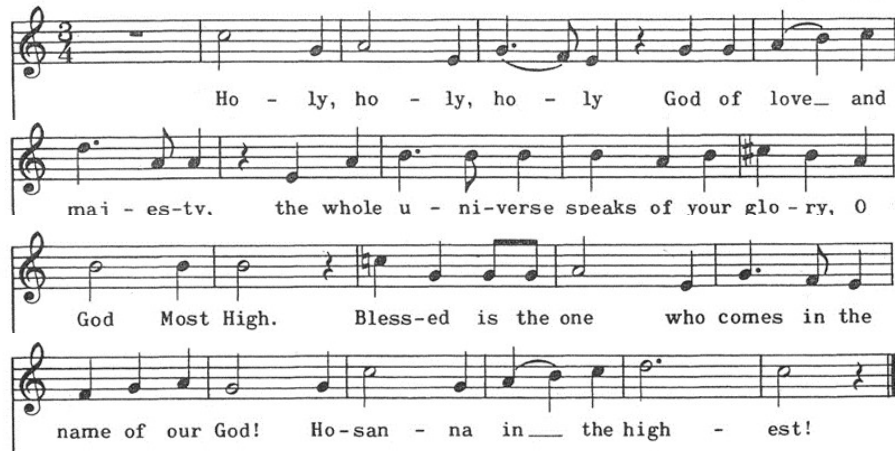


ONE LICENSE

SANCTUS

Holy, Holy, Holy (Sanctus)

Alice Jordan



PROCLAIMING THE MYSTERY OF FAITH

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

ADDRESS TO RADIO AND LIVESTREAM

PREPARING THE SERVERS

CALL TO THE TABLE

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

(The cups in the inner ring contain white grape juice, the 2 outer rings contain red wine. Please place the used cups in the bowls provided as you return to your seat.)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

In thanksgiving for this sacrament, let us pray together as Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

* CLOSING HYMN "Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service" #461

SOMETHING TO INSPIRE

PRELUDE

GREETING

Sisters and brothers in Christ, beloved children of God:
Grace, mercy and peace be with you all.

And also with you.

Alleluia! Let your face shine upon your servant and teach me your statutes.
(Ps. 119:135)

Alleluia!

*CALL TO WORSHIP (Psalm 1 adapt.)

Happy are those who do not follow
the advice of the wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread,
or sit in the seat of scoffers;

**Happy are those who thrill to God's Word,
who wrestle with living God's way in the world today.**

They are like trees planted in streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.

In all that they do, they prosper.

**Happy are those who thrill to God's Word,
who wrestle with living God's way in the world today.**

The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
**Happy are those who thrill to God's Word,
who wrestle with living God's way in the world today.**

for God watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Happy are those who follow the path of righteousness!

*PRAISE HYMN

"Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

#587

PASSING THE PEACE

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

The peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A TIME FOR ALL AGES

A LESSON FROM THE EPISTLES

Philemon 1-25

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment.

Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

One thing more—prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping through your prayers to be restored to you.

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

THE GOOD NEWS

Luke 14:25-33

²⁵ Now large crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and said to them, ²⁶ “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my

disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹ Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

This is the Good News. In this truth we find eternal life.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE

*COMMUNION HYMN *“O, Jesus, I Have Promised”* vs. 1 & 4 #612

MISSION FOCUS Neighbors In Need

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

*PRESENTATION OF GIFTS *“Take My Gifts”* vs. 1 #381

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God loves a generous giver! Let us pray with joy as we dedicate these gifts:

**With reverence and awe for your ways,
we offer our gifts for the work of love and justice,
the work of healing, restoring and setting free in your holy name,
God of our hearts. Amen.**

ORDER FOR HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION

GREETING

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to God Most High.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

PRAYER

... in the unending song of praise: