



Saint Stephens UCC
Where God is still speaking,



October 4, 2026 | 9:00 AM | NINETEENTH Sunday after Pentecost

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
You're welcome here!

Technical Directors: Jody Meyer, Corey Dornbrack

Organist: Darlene Johnson

Music Director: Tiffany Bucheger

Faith Formation Director: Kari Weiland

Pastor Mike and Sue are attending their niece's wedding in Madison this weekend. Pastor will be in the office tomorrow. We welcome our member, Chris Stevenson, to lead us in worship today.'

On most Sundays, children will begin in worship and be dismissed to their Sunday School classes after the "Time for All Ages." On Communion Sunday, they will start in Sunday School and join their families for Communion during the service.

For those children staying in worship, please 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 other ways during the service.

POINTS TO PONDER PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

"Children who grow what they eat will often eat what they grow"

— Melanie Charlene

Quick and Easy Electronic Giving!!

To give an offering to the church, 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.



SOMETHING TO INSPIRE

WELCOME

PRELUDE

GREETING AND INVOCATION

Pastor: Morning has broken! In the name of the triune God: the Creator, the Christ and the Holy Spirit, I greet you on this glorious morn.

ALL: Amen!

Let us pray...Amen.

* CALL TO WORSHIP (Inspired by Psalm 19)

One: The heavens tell the glory of God! The way of the Holy One is perfect.

Many: God's commandments are right and clear.

One: The creation tells the glory of God! The work of the Holy One is perfect.

Many: God's expectations are pure and righteous.

One: The people tell the glory of God! The law of the Holy One is perfect.

Many: Let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, Holy One, our rock and redeemer.

* CELEBRATION HYMN

"In Christ There Is No East or West"

#687

* PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

Righteous God, you have given us blueprints to follow for living a faithful life. Your commandments are clear and your example considerable. Yet, we often drift away from loving you, loving our neighbor, and loving ourselves. Remind us that the path to flourishing, full life is love. Lead us back to that everlasting path so that we might be fruitful and give glory to your name. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

.God's grace meets us at our point of need with compassion, direction, and strength. Receive this grace in order to transform us into the people we can be —shining the radiant reflection of the image we bear and producing our own fruit.

* RESPONSE

"Christ Our Peace" 2X

Text and Music: Marty Haugen

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**Christ, our peace, you break down the walls that divide us;
Christ, our peace, come, make us one body in you.**

* PASSING THE PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

A TIME FOR ALL AGES

A LESSON FROM TORAH

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

Then God spoke all these words,

² “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³ you shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ “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.

⁷ “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.

⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work.

¹² “Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

¹³ “You shall not murder.

¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵ “You shall not steal.

¹⁶ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, male or female slave, ox, donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

¹⁸ When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance ¹⁹ and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen, but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” ²⁰ Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid, for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin.”

Here ends the reading. May we find blessing in the reading, hearing and living of these words.

A LESSON FROM THE EPISTLES

Philippians 3:4b-14

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

THE GOOD NEWS

Matthew 21:33-46

[And Jesus said:] "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures:
'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes'?"

"Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

* HYMN OF THE DAY *"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"* #195

PRAYERS of the FAITHFUL

... merciful God,

Hear our prayers.

LORD'S PRAYER

MISSION FOCUS St. Vincent - Emergency Assistance

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

OFFERTORY

* PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS
"God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending" vs. 1 #606

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Generous God, may these gifts be pleasing to you. We pray to be faithful and fruitful in the use of these offerings so that we will serve you, O God, and our neighbors in love. Amen.

* CLOSING HYMN *"You Are the Seed"* (vs. 1 &2) #478

Words and Music: Cesáreo Gabaraín, 1979, alt.

Transl. Raquel Gutiérrez-Achon and Skinner Chávez-Melo, 1987

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You are the seed that will grow a new sprout;
You're a star that will shine through the day;
You are the yeast and a small grain of salt,
A beacon to glow in the dark,
You are the dawn that will bring a new day;
You're the wheat that will bear golden grain;
You are a sting and a soft, gentle touch,
My witnesses where're you go.

Refrain

Go my friends, go to the world

Proclaiming love to all,

Messengers of my forgiving peace, eternal love.

Be, my friends, a loyal witness, from the dead I arose;

"Lo, I'll be with you forever, till the end of the world."

Cont'd on Next Pg . . .

You are the flame that will lighten the dark,
Sending sparkles of hope, faith and love;
You are the shepherds to lead the whole world
Through valleys and pastures of peace.
You are the friends that I chose for myself,
The word that I want to proclaim.
You are the city that's built on a rock
Where justice and truth always reign.
Refrain

*** BENEDICTION**

May the God of the harvest bring forth seeds in you.
May every good seed you plant produce fruit.
May our fruit nourish and nurture the world.
Go, in peace and fruitfulness knowing that the Holy One goes with you.
Amen.

Go in peace. You go with power to heal a broken world.

Thanks be to God.

*** RESPONSE**

"Go, Make a Difference" (vs. 1)

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Chorus

Go make a diff'rence, we can make a diff'rence
Go make a diff'rence in the world
Go make a diff'rence we can make a diff'rence
Go make a diff'rence in the world

We are the salt in the earth, called to let the people see
The love of God in you and me
We are the light of the world, not to be hidden, but be seen
Go make a diff'rence in the world.

Chorus

Go make a diff'rence, we can make a diff'rence
Go make a diff'rence in the world
Go make a diff'rence we can make a diff'rence
Go make a diff'rence in the world

Thank you!

Musicians today are Tiffany Bucheger, Darlene Johnson and the Saint Stephens Choir.

Radio Ministry is sponsored in memory of Gay & Sally Oberg's wedding anniversary on October 5 from family.

Livestream is sponsored by Dennis & Sharon Woller in honor of our 60th wedding anniversary on September 24, 2026.

Technical Directors: Jody Meyer, Corey Dornbrack



Coffee Hour today
hosted by
THE WISE team!