Saint Stephens UCC

Where God is still speaking,



November 15, 2026 | 9:00 AM | TWENTY-FIFTH 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

On most Sundays, the children will follow their teachers to Sunday School after the "Time for All Ages." On Communion Sunday, they will start in Sunday School and join their families for Communion during the service

To encourage children to participate 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
Walter Brueggemann, 21st Century theologian:
The prophetic tasks of the church are to tell the truth in a society that lives in illusion, grieve in a society that lives in denial, and express hope in a society that lives in despair.

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.

Scan Me
Saint Stephens
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

SOMETHING TO INSPIRE

WELCOME

PRELUDE

GREETING AND INVOCATION
In the name of the Creator, the Christ and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.
The grace of our Savior Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

Let us pray:
Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

* CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 90)
O God, you have been
our dwelling-place
in all generations.
Before the mountains
were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth
and the world
from everlasting to everlasting
you are God.

Our years pass before us,
You sweep them away;
they are like a dream,
like grass that is renewed
in the morning;
in the evening
it fades
and withers.
Before the mountains
were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth
and the world
from everlasting to everlasting
you are God.

For all our days pass away
our years come to an end
like a sigh.
they are too soon gone,
and we fly away.
So teach us
to count our days
that we may gain
a wise heart.

* CELEBRATION HYMN *"Come, Ye Thankful People, Come"* #718

* PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION
Let us confess our sin, both personal and communal, in the presence of God and of one another.
Holy God,
we confess that we have trusted in our preparation
instead of your invitation.
We prioritize our piety over care for your beloved.
We trust the voice of our shame and fear,
which keeps us from entering fully
into relationship with you and others.
We are not awake to the coming of your reign.
Rouse us and rescue us,
that we may enter into your joy.
Amen.

* WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND NEW LIFE
Jesus, the good shepherd, feeds you with his mercy.
You are God's Beloved. You are forgiven.
Blessed are you.
Amen.

* RESPONSE *"Christ Our Peace"* 2x
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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

LESSONS OF THE FIRST TESTAMENT Judges 4:1-7

[1] The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, after Ehud died.
[2] So the Lord sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goiim. [3] Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help, for he had nine hundred chariots of iron and had oppressed the Israelites cruelly twenty years.

[4] At that time Deborah, a prophet, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. [5] She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. [6] She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Position yourself at Mount Tabor, taking ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. [7] I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops, and I will give him into your hand.'"

THE GOOD NEWS Matthew 25:14-30

Jesus tells a parable about his second coming, indicating that it is not sufficient merely to maintain things as they are. Those who await his return should make good use of the gifts that God has provided them.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] [14] "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; [15] to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. At once [16] the one who had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made five more talents. [17] In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. [18] But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. [19] After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. [20] Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' [21] His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' [22] And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' [23] His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

[24] Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter, [25] so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ [26] But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter? [27] Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. [28] So take the talent from him and give it to the one with the ten talents. [29] For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. [30] As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

This is the Good News. In this truth we find eternal life.
Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE

* HYMN OF THE DAY *“For the Fruit of All Creation”* #714

PRAYERS of the FAITHFUL
...God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

LORD’S PRAYER

MISSION FOCUS Christmas Spirit - Lincoln County Giving Tree

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

OFFERTORY

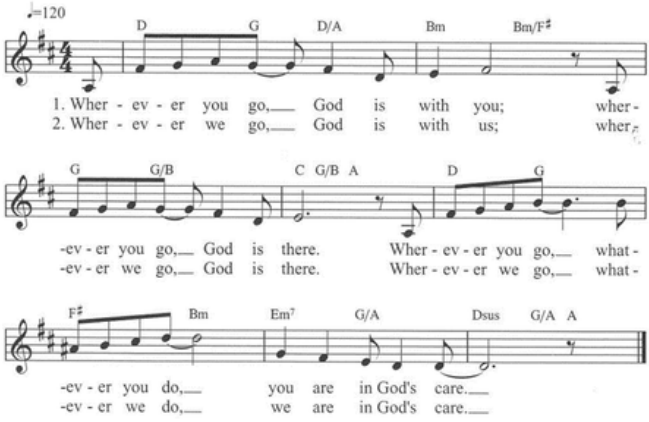
* PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS
“God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending” vs. 3 #606

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION
Eternal God,
our time, talents, and treasures are gifts from you.
Receive what we offer,
and all that you entrust to us,
until hungry no more, all the world is fed,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

* CLOSING HYMN *“O God Our Help in Ages Past”* #67

* BENEDICTION
As you go from this time and gathering,
Rest in the covenant,
Choose love every day,
Sustain hope in action,
Serve the Holy One with love and honor,
And be a witness for the goodness of God in the land of the living. Amen.
Amen.
Our God of relentless grace go with you.
Thanks be to God.

* BENEDICTION RESPONSE *"Wherever You Go"*



Thank you!

Musicians today are Darlene Johnson, Tiffany Bucheger, and Paula McIntyre.

Radio Ministry is sponsored in memory of Gay Oberg and his November 14 birthday, from family.

Altar Flowers are offered in memory Audrey Heuser on her birthday, November 19 from the Hinner & Heuser families.

Livestream is sponsored by Sue Kunkel in honor of Mike Kunkel on what would have been our 51st wedding anniversary.

Technical Directors: Jody Meyer, Corey Dornbrack

TAKING THE LESSONS HOME

How do we empower our children to use their gifts and talents in worship?

It is easy to encourage children and youth who have already developed many talents, such as being a good reader or a steady handed candle lighter. We too easily, however, dismiss the child who is too shy to serve as an usher or too energetic to help light candles. But their energy or quiet reserve means they might be great leaders someday!

They are just waiting for the adults in the church to notice their hidden talents and patiently help them grow through small opportunities.

This week, ask your children if there is anything at church they wonder about or with which they would like to help. Ask them the same thing about home. Are they ready to start learning the chores for their next level of maturity?

If there is something at church they want to participate in, let the pastor know. Together, we can figure out a way to nurture their interests and talents.

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