



FEBRUARY 8, 2026 | 9:00 AM | FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

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
Guest Speaker: Naomi Enders

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.

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 presenting the offering.

WORDS TO PONDER PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Quotes from Church Camp:

- "Camp is my favorite place on earth. This week I learned that God forgives in a way I had never felt before" – Middle School Camper
- "I learned that leaving camp doesn't mean your growth with Christ stops – it just is a place for it to take off and grow into your life back home." – Staff member
- "I will never be too old for Church Camp." —Great-Grandmother at the Grandma and Me Camp

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.

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Saint Stephens

 UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

SOMETHING TO INSPIRE

WELCOME

PRELUDE

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Shout it out—no holding back!

There is truth that needs to be spoken.

Let the people rise and hear it.

We are listening. We stand ready.

Shout to the weary, the overlooked, the worn-thin:

With courage, we gather.

With voices, we speak words of life.

Shout to the hearts carrying hidden weight,

The Holy One meets us here in our honesty.

Shout to the systems that press people down,

Their power is not the final word.

A new song is rising—

A song that frees,

A rhythm that restores,

A melody of reparation.

Shout to the builders, the dreamers, the stubbornly hopeful:

The time has come for burdens to lift,

For the grip of harm to loosen,

For the rebuilding what has been broken.

Come, Beloved Community, Come.

bring your resolve, your compassion, your wide-awake faith.

Let us worship the God who calls us

to remove every yoke.

* OPENING HYMN

"Gather Us In"

#284

SHARING GOD'S PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

A TIME FOR ALL AGES

LESSON FROM THE PROPHETS**Isaiah 58:1-9a**

Shortly after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon, the people were troubled by the ineffectiveness of their fasts. God reminds them that outward observance is no substitute for genuine fasting that results in acts of justice, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless and clothing the naked. Listen for the instructions for us today in the words of the prophet writing in Isaiah's name, chapter 58, verses 1-9a.

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

"Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

*** HYMN OF THE DAY****"We Meet You, O Christ"****#183****GOSPEL LESSON****Matthew 5:13-20**

[Jesus said:] "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called

great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

This is the good news.
In these words we find eternal life.

MESSAGE

PASTORAL PRAYER LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERING OUR GIFTS AND LIVES

"Still Waters (Psalm 23)" by Leanna Crawford

MISSION MOMENT

Haven

* DEDICATION OF OUR GIFTS AND LIVES
Calling Voice Who Leads Us Toward Freedom,
we give thanks for every gift offered today—
for open hands, willing hearts,
and the courage to imagine a shared life made whole.

Bless what we have brought.
Make these gifts more than generosity—
**make them instruments of justice,
seeds of compassion,
signs that your vision is taking root among us.**

For every burden lifted,
for every neighbor tended,
for every act of mercy made possible,
we give you thanks.
**Carry us forward in this work
with gratitude deep enough
to shape the world we are building together.**
Amen.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

* BENEDICTION

Our worship service is over, our worshiping God through service begins anew as we leave here.

May the peace of God enfold you,
The compassion of Christ stir you to action,

And the sustaining power of the Holy Spirit keep you strong,
This day and always.

Amen!

Go in peace. Make Christ's light shine in the world.
Thanks be to God.

* RESPONSE

"Go In Peace"

#445

POSTLUDE



The poster features a pink background with a white heart on the left and a cartoon bee on the right. The title 'Love the Littles Diaper Drive' is in large, stylized, brown letters. Below the title is a photo of three babies. The text 'Love the Littles this Valentine's Day by donating new diapers and wipes, or make a monetary donation, to support Our Saviour's Diaper Closet.' is in a smaller font. The 'Dates:' section is followed by 'February 6th- February 23rd'. The 'Drop-off Locations:' section lists various locations in two columns. A note at the bottom left says 'The Diaper Closet is especially in need of large size diapers, pull-ups and baby wipes.' Another note at the bottom right says 'Our Saviour's Diaper Closet supports our community by providing diapers to families who might need a little extra help.'

Love the Littles
Diaper Drive

Love the Littles this Valentine's Day by donating new diapers and wipes, or make a monetary donation, to support Our Saviour's Diaper Closet.

Dates:
February 6th-
February 23rd

Drop-off Locations:

- Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
- Christ United Methodist Church
- St. Stephen's United Church of Christ
- The Chiropractic Wellness Center
- Ascension Episcopal Church
- Park City Credit Union
- Polka-Dotted Pie
- Incredible Bank
- Westside Market
- Riverside Athletic Club
- Sawmill Brewing Co.

The Diaper Closet is especially in need of large size diapers, pull-ups and baby wipes.

Monetary donations to purchase diapers in bulk can be sent to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 300 Logan St, Merrill.

Our Saviour's Diaper Closet supports our community by providing diapers to families who might need a little extra help.

THANK YOU!

Musicians today are Abrielle Tiffany and Tiffany Bucheger.

Radio Ministry is sponsored in memory of our dad, William Johnson, for his birthday on Feb. 8 from his family.

Livestream is sponsored by David and Cheryl Buck in honor or David's birthday today, February 8.

RADIO MINISTRY & LIVESTREAM



**Open Radio Dates:
February 15 and 22**



**Open Livestream:
March - December 2026**

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TAKING THE LESSONS HOME

In 2002 the producer of BBC-London, Danny Wallace, gained a following when he issued an anonymous invitation in a London newspaper to "join him." After hundreds of replies, the *Karma Army* was born. It is an online community commissioned to perform random acts of kindness every Friday, called "Good Fridays." In ***Building a Discipling Culture***, Mike Breen and Steve Cockram reflect on the impact a Christian community could have if it made a similar pledge but for different reasons.

Discuss as a family this week what you might do as a random act of kindness this coming Friday. Bake cookies for a neighbor, pay for a family's meal at a fast-food restaurant, bring a snack tray to a police station or fire department, volunteer to help with an activity time at a nursing home or bring a meal to someone just home from the hospital. Do you have an elderly neighbor who might need some simple home repairs completed or some help shoveling snow? You will come up with many more ideas than these. Then, think of a day and time each week when you can let your light shine in some way!

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