



APRIL 26, 2026 | 9:00 AM | FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

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

## **Confirmation Sunday**

**On most Sundays, children will begin in worship and be dismissed to their Sunday School classes after the "Time for All Ages."**

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

*Charles Schulz, 20th century cartoonist*

"I cannot fail to be thrilled every time I read the things that Jesus said, and I am more and more convinced of the necessity of following him. What Jesus means to me is this: In him we are able to see God, and to understand God's feelings toward us."

**\* Invites those comfortably able to do so to stand.**

### **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.



PRELUDE                      *"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"*                      Chime Choir

\* ENTRY FROM 4 DIRECTIONS

\* PROCESSIONAL HYMN                      *"Here I Am, Lord"*                      #452

\* INVOCATION

Let us pray.

Incarnate God,

You are the one who comes to us in Jesus Christ.

**Holy One,**

**You are the one who comes to us in the Holy Spirit.**

**Sovereign of Earth and Heaven,**

**You are the one who calls us to recognize you today and every day**

**As the mysterious Three In One.**

**Gather our hearts and minds this day.**

**Kindle our God-consciousness.**

**Let us worship you in awe and wonder!**

**Amen.**

PASSING THE PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A TIME FOR ALL AGES

LESSON FROM THE EARLY CHURCH

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

\* HYMN OF THE DAY

*"I Would Be True"*

#608

THE GOOD NEWS

John 10:1-10

[Jesus said:] "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the

voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

This is the good news. In this truth we find eternal life.  
**Thanks be to God.**

MESSAGE

\* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**United Church of Christ Statement of Faith in the form of a doxology**

**We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:**

**You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.**

**You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.**

**You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.**

**In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.**

**You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.**

**You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.**

**You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.**

**Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you.**

**Amen.**

*ORDER FOR CONFIRMATION OF FAITH*

Aubrie Brandenburg  
William Frisch

Will Detert  
Bailey Kohnhorst

Avery Clark  
Owen Weisman

INVITATION

ADDRESS

SENTENCES

QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES

*PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION*

Let us pray:

**Almighty God, who in baptism received these your servants into the church, forgave their sins, and promised them eternal life; increase in them the gifts of your Holy Spirit. Grant love for others, joy in serving you, peace in disagreement, patience in suffering, kindness toward all people, goodness in evil times, faithfulness in temptation, gentleness in the face of opposition, self-control in all things. Thereby strengthen them for their ministry in the world, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

ACT OF CONFIRMATION

QUESTION OF PARTICIPATION AND COVENANT OF MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME BY THE CONGREGATION

I invite the members of St. Stephens UCC of Merrill to express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ:

**We promise you our continuing friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and be witnesses of our risen Savior. Amen.**

GREETING OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

MISSION MOMENT                      NAMI Northwoods

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

*"Come Sing a Song of Harvest"* vs. 3 & 4                      #719

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Holy Spirit of God,  
we dedicate our lives  
through the dedication of our gifts.  
We ask for your bold winds to magnify and multiply our tangible gifts  
to further your work of liberation, justice, and charity here  
and around the world. Amen.**

INTERCESSORY AND COMMUNION PRAYERS

...And with all the angels above we sing your glorious praise:

SANCTUS        *Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty,  
The whole universe speaks of your glory,  
O God Most High.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God!  
Hosanna in the highest!*

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

...until we shall banquet at last with all the saints in glory.

**All: Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION ---AND BREAKING AND POURING

LORD'S PRAYER

PREPARING THE SERVERS

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

(The center of the tray contains juice, the two outer rings contain wine. There are bowls to either side for your used cups. Gluten free wafers are available, ask your server.)

The bread of heaven given for you.

**Amen.**

The cup of salvation shed for you.

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING.

Holy God, we rejoice that you have fed us at this table  
with the spiritual food of the body and blood of Christ,  
and have united us in communion  
with your church on earth and in heaven.

Grant us the abiding presence of your Holy Spirit.

Enrich our faith.

Nourish us through the means of grace.

Strengthen our life together. Amen.

**Amen.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

God has done great things for us, and we rejoice.

Let us go forth from this place to do great things

in the name of Christ, whose call leads us to restoration and new life

**Amen.**

Go now, in the assurance that the God of Abundance created you, that Jesus Christ leads you in God's way, and that the Holy Spirit upholds and empowers you to remember.

**Thanks be to God.**

SENDING HYMN

*“Shine, Jesus, Shine”*

Words & Music: Graham Kendrick  
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*Refrain*

**Shine, Jesus, shine**  
**Fill this land with the Father's glory**  
**Blaze, Spirit, blaze**  
**Set our hearts on fire**  
**Flow, river, flow**  
**Flood the nations with grace and mercy**  
**Send forth your word**  
**Lord, and let there be light**

**Lord, the light of your love is shining**  
**In the midst of the darkness, shining**  
**Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us**  
**Set us free by the truth you now bring us**  
**Shine on me, shine on me**

*Refrain*

**Lord, I come to your awesome presence**  
**From the shadows into your radiance**  
**By the blood I may enter your brightness**  
**Search me, try me, consume all my darkness**  
**Shine on me, shine on me**

*Refrain*

**As we gaze on your kingly brightness**  
**So our faces display your likeness**  
**Ever changing from glory to glory**  
**Mirrored here may our lives tell your story**  
**Shine on me, shine on me**

*Refrain*

POSTLUDE

*We continue to celebrate today's Confirmation  
with cake and coffee in the Kuck Lounge  
immediately after the service!*



## TAKING THE LESSONS HOME

A good way to get younger children thinking about Confirmation is to talk about promises they make. Talk about the promises they make to you and the implied promises they make to their teachers and fellow students so that school can be a healthy and safe learning environment. Ask them to think about how they feel when a classmate forgets the promises and disrupts the class or doesn't contribute to the class the way most others try to contribute. Also talk about the promises you make to the church and how you live out those promises, i.e. financial support, volunteering, worshiping together, inviting others to join the church and finding fulfillment in being a part of this faith community are just a few promises. What are others you think of with that question? What promises do your children name when you talk about it?

## THANK YOU!

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

**Radio Ministry and Altar Flowers** are sponsored by Nancy & Jeff Porath in honor of Owen's Confirmation.

**Livestream** is sponsored in honor of Mental Health Awareness, "Reach out, Speak up, Get help", from Corey & Cathy Dornbrack.

**Technical Directors:** Jody Meyer, Corey Dornbrack

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