



Can you spot the busy bee?



AUGUST 30, 2026 | 9:00 AM | FOURTEENTH 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

Sunday School is on break for the summer. Children are welcome and valued in worship with all of us.

Helping Children Enjoy Worship 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

"The Wilderness holds answers to more questions than we have yet learned to ask." — Nancy Newhall

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
GATHERING MUSIC

*As We Gather (audio only)
To Love You*

WELCOME

PRELUDE

GREETING

The love of God, the creator of all that is, the peace of Christ who calms the storms of life and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit who calls us into community, be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us pray: ... through us for your glory. Amen.

* CALL TO WORSHIP (Inspired by Psalm 105)

One: O give thanks to the Holy One, the I Am Who I Am, who calls us together and makes their name known.

Many: We glory in God's holy name! Let the hearts that seek the Holy One rejoice and testify!

One: O give thanks to the Holy One, God of our ancestors, who lives and reigns with all generations.

Many: Sing praises to our God. Remember their wonderful works, saving acts, and redemptive deeds.

One: O give thanks to the Holy One, Mighty and Just God, who lends strength in the struggle and leads in righteousness.

Many: Seek the presence of the Holy One. Praise God!

* PRAISE HYMN

"Gather Us In"

#284

* PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE (Inspired by Rom 12)

Redeemer and Guide, we travel with you because you never leave us.

Yet, sometimes we drift from the path of life you give us. Rather than holding fast to what is good, we compromise with evil. Rather than persevering in prayer, we dwell in anger, rage, and conspiracies. Rather than sharing our blessings and pursuing hospitality, we hoard the resources you have given us to share. Help us to live in love and harmony with one another. Empower us to pursue peace for all. Let us overcome and overwhelm evil with good, compassion, and hope in your name. Amen.

* WORDS OF GRACE

* PASSING THE PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

A TIME FOR ALL AGES

Noisy Offering

A LESSON FROM TORAH

Exodus 3:1-15

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up."

When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain." But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.

THE GOOD NEWS

Matthew 16:21-28

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and

follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

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

MESSAGE

* HYMN OF THE DAY *"Here I Am, Lord"* #452

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL
... God in your mercy,
Hear our prayers.

LORD'S PRAYER

MISSION FOCUS Blue Jay Nest

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

OFFERTORY

* PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS *"Take My Gifts"* #381

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION
Holy One, we present these offerings to you in hope and love. May they be a gift in our community and the world. May they spread hope and love. And, may they witness to your abundant and generous creation. Amen.

* CLOSING HYMN *Requests*

* BENEDICTION
Trust in God in the wilderness.
Hope in God through the wilderness.
Follow God beyond the wilderness.
With the assurance that God makes the ground holy,
hears the cries of the people,
and comes near to the suffering,
Go, in peace and determination,
To serve and love God and all creation.
Thanks be to God!

RESPONSE *"May the God of Hope Go With Us"* Next Pg
Words: Alvin Schutmaat, 1921-1988, alt.
Music: Argentine folk melody

May the God of Hope Go with Us

Dios de la esperanza

The musical score is written on seven staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics in Spanish and English. The lyrics are:
1. *¡Dios de la es - pe - ran - za, da - nos go - zo y paz!*
May the God of hope go with us ev - 'ry day,
2. *Al mun - do en cri - sis, ha - bla tu ver - dad.*
to a world in need with news of joy and peace.
3. *Dios de la jus - ti - cia, mán - da - nos tu luz,*
May the God of jus - tice speed us on our way,
4. *luz y es - pe - ran - za en la os - cu - ri - dad.*
bring - ing light and hope to ev - 'ry land and race.
5. *O - re - mos por la paz, can - te - mos*
Pray - ing, let us work for peace; sing - ing, share our
6. *de tu a - mor. Lu - che - mos por la paz,*
joy with all; work - ing for a world that's new,
7. *fie - les a ti, Se - ñor.*
faith - ful when we hear Christ's call.

Portions of the service are from: ***Beyond the Wilderness: Service Prayers for the Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost Year A***, written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ.

THANK YOU!

Musicians today are Darlene Johnson and Tiffany Bucheger.

Radio Ministry is sponsored in memory of Bruce Schaefer from Janet Schaefer.

Livestream is sponsored in celebration of the wedding of Sarah Ratajczyk and Lucas Raube on August 29, 2026, from The Harlan Fausch Family.

Technical Directors: Jody Meyer, Corey Dornbrack

Copyright License - 11372458

Streaming License - 20775969

OneLicense.net #A-722742



CCLI[®]



ONE LICENSE

TAKING THE LESSONS HOME

The cross is a difficult part of our faith to explain to children.

Almost everyone, however, has experienced a time when they wanted to do the right thing and someone else tried to talk them out of it.

This week, ask your children—and think about yourself—about times when they have wanted to do what they thought was right but someone tried to stop them.

Why did the person try to stop them? Were they afraid of being embarrassed? Crossing a boundary? Being seen with a different group of people? Or perhaps they thought the activity was simply too dangerous.

Use open ended questions such as, “How would you have felt if you didn’t do that?” Or “How did it feel to give up on something because your friends told you it was silly or embarrassing?” to explore these memories and think about times in the future when you/they might have to make a difficult choice again.

With younger children, you can ask them to draw a picture of the before and after scenes or act the scene out with puppets, Lego or action figures.

Rev. Mike Southcombe	Senior Minister	mike@ststephensucc.net
Terra Holdridge	Administrative Director	terra@ststephensucc.net
Kari Weiland	Christian Education Director	kari@ststephensucc.net
Kimberly McCaskill	Administrative Assistant	kimberly@ststephensucc.net
Tiffany Bucheger	Music Director	tiffany@ststephensucc.net
Timothy Ruprecht	Facilities Manager	
Darlene Johnson	Organist	