



SEPTEMBER 13, 2026 | 9:00 AM | SIXTEENTH 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
Song Leader: The Saint Stephens Choir
Faith Formation Director: Kari Weiland

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

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.

Our Nursery is available for infants to 3-year-olds and for 4– and 5-year-olds who find it difficult to focus during worship. The nursery is located on the 3rd floor and has a drop off and sign out procedure to follow.

POINTS TO PONDER PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Henri Nouwen, 21st Century

For Jesus there are no countries to be conquered, no ideologies to be imposed, no people to be dominated. There are only children, women and men to be loved.

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

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.

* CALL TO WORSHIP (Inspired by Psalm 103)

One: Bless the Holy One! Bless God's holy name!

Many: Bless God our Healer, Redeemer, and Friend.

One: Bless the Holy One! Remember the works of God.

Many: Bless the God who saves us, loves us, and forgives us.

One: Bless the Holy One! Bless the God of life and justice!

Many: Bless the One whose loves and mercy endures but whose anger does not. Bless God, O our souls!

* CELEBRATION HYMN

"Ten Thousand Reasons"

Next Pg

Words and Music: Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin

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PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE (Inspired by Rom 14)

Holy One, you have given us companions in life, family, friends, and neighbors. As Romans 14:7-8 reminds us, "For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." Help us live in ways that reflect your goodness, righteousness, and truth. Help us to love our neighbors with the fullness of shared life, accountability, and community. Help us repair what has been damaged, redeem what has been lost, and restore what has been broken for your name's sake. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

Beloved, God blesses us with the gift of accountability so that we need not settle for forgiveness that trivializes harm, ignores the need for repair, and leaves relationships fractured. God has given us accountability so that we may be transformed both individually and collectively, offender and offended, perpetrator and survivor for restoration, reconciliation, and righteousness. Receive the conjoined gifts of accountability and forgiveness.

Ten Thousand Reasons

Refrain

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul;
wor-ship his ho - ly name. Sing like nev - er be-fore,
O my soul; I'll wor-ship your ho - ly name.

1 The sun comes up, it's a new day dawn-ing;
2 You're rich in love, and you're slow to an - ger. Your
3 And on that day when my strength is fail - ing, the

. . . it's time to sing your song a - gain. What - ev - er may
name . . . is . . . great, and your heart is kind. For all . . . your
end . . . draws near, and my time has come; . . . still, my

pass, and what - ev - er lies be - fore me, let me be
good-ness, I will keep . . . on . . . sing-ing— ten thou-sand
soul will sing your praise un - end-ing— ten thou-sand

Refrain

sing - ing when the eve - ning comes.
rea - sons for my heart to find.
years and then for - ev - er - more!

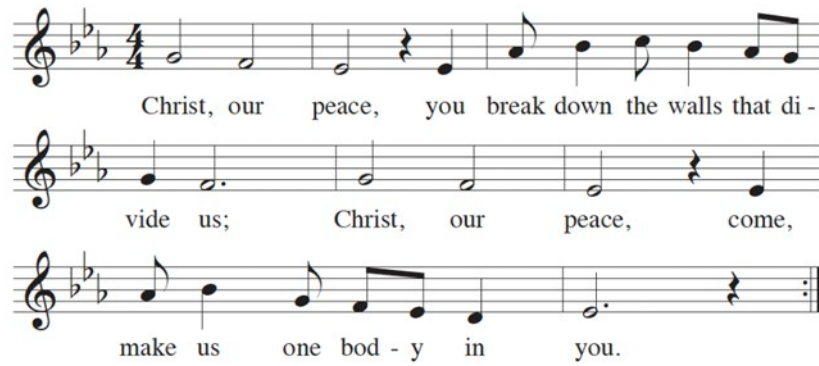
* RESPONSE

"Christ Our Peace" 3x

Text and Music: Marty Haugen

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* PASSING THE PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

A TIME FOR ALL AGES

Blessing of the Sunday School Teachers
Prayers for a fruitful year

A LESSON FROM TORAH

Exodus 14:19-31

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. ²⁰It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. ²²The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³The Egyptians pursued and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴At the morning watch the Lord, in the pillar of fire and cloud, looked down on the Egyptian army and threw the Egyptian army into a panic. ²⁵He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt."

²⁶Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." ²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea

returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹ But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So, the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

CHOIR ANTHEM

"How Can I Keep From Singing"

***Today's anthem is dedicated in the memory of Mike Kunkel from St. Stephen's UCC Church Choir.*

THE GOOD NEWS

Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So, my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

This is the good news. In this truth we find eternal life.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

... merciful God,

Hear our prayers.

LORD'S PRAYER

MISSION FOCUS

Neighbors in Need
Nepal Disaster relief

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

OFFERTORY

* PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

"God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending" vs. 1 #606

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING

Generous God, magnify the offerings we bring and may they be fruitful for the nurture and care of creation, the faithfulness of your church, and the needs of the communities and world we inhabit. Be glorified through our generosity. Amen.

* CLOSING HYMN

"God Be With You 'til We Meet Again" #434

* BENEDICTION

. . . And, may the grace you receive be the grace you extend.

Thanks be to God!

* RESPONSE

"Go, Make a Difference"

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POSTLUDE

Portions of the service are from: ***To Settle Accounts: Service Prayers for the Sixteenth 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, Tiffany Bucheger, and the Saint Stephens Choir.

Radio Ministry is sponsored in memory of Willard Detert for his September 12 birthday, from Mary Walsh and Jacob Walsh.

Livestream is sponsored by Diana Catlin in honor of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren for a good school year!

Technical Directors: Jody Meyer, Corey Dornbrack

GO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Steve Angrisano and Tom Tomaszek

Refrain



Go make a dif - f'rence. We can make a dif -
 - f'rence. Go make a dif - f'rence in the world.
 Go make a dif - f'rence. We can make a dif -
 - f'rence. Go make a dif - f'rence in the world.

Verses



1. We are the salt of the earth, called to let the peo - ple
 2. We are the hands of Christ reach-ing out to those in
 3. So let your love shine on, let it shine for all to

1. see the love of God in you and me.
 2. need, the face of God for all to see.
 3. see. Go make a dif - f'rence in the world.

1. We are the light of the world, not to be hid - den but be
 2. We are the spir - it of hope; we are the voice of
 3. And the spir - it of Christ will be with us as we

1. seen. Go make a dif - f'rence in the world.
 2. peace. Go make a dif - f'rence in the world.
 3. go. Go make a dif - f'rence in the world.

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DISCIPLESHIP