

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Santa Clarita

The Sixth Sunday of Pentecost — Proper 9

10:30 AM — July 5, 2026

The Altar flowers are given to the glory of God by Cathy Gero and Linda & Joe Merkens in memory of Eleanor R. Gero, loving wife, mother, and grandmother — a child of God.

Before the service begins, we encourage you to use the following for meditation.

Jesus' mission is not primarily to inform people about God so that they can understand more about God. Jesus' mission is rather to bring people to faith; to help them enter the Kingdom of God, to be saved. Our hearts are not changed by simply understanding, but by the mystery of faith.

Br. Geoffrey Tristram, SSJE

-Generally, we stand to give praise, sit to listen (to scripture and sermon), and stand or kneel to pray. These postures help us stay focused on the worship, but there are no strict rules and you should take whatever posture is appropriate to your needs.-

Prelude

America the Beautiful

Samuel Ward

-Processions have long been an important part of liturgical worship. At the beginning of the service they signify an intention to move toward the altar and into direct relationship to worship God. Those who wish to may bow in reverence as the cross passes to acknowledge Christ's sacrifice upon it.-

Entrance Hymn #657

"Love divine, all loves excelling"

Hyfrydol



1. Love di - vine, all loves ex - cell - ing, joy of heaven, to earth_ come down,
 2. Come, al - might - y to de - liv - er, let us all thy life__ re - ceive;
 3. Fi - nish then__ thy new cre - a - tion; pure and spot - less let__ us be;



fix in us__ thy hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy faith - ful mer - cies crown.
 sud - den - ly__ re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er - more thy tem - ples leave.
 let us see__ thy great sal - va - tion per - fect - ly re - stored in thee:



Je - sus, thou__ art all com - pas - sion, pure, un - bound - ed love__ thou art;
 Thee we would be al - way bless - ing, serve thee as__ thy hosts_ a - bove,
 changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry, till in heaven we take__ our place,



vis - it us__ with thy__ sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - ery trem - bling heart.
 pray, and praise thee with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in__ thy per - fect love.
 till__ we cast__ our crowns be - fore__ thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise.

-The liturgy is God's community gathered to actively share the Word and the Eucharist. We invite and encourage your participation in this community. Please join in the spoken responses and hymns shown in the service bulletin.-

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

-The opening acclamation is the greeting of the people by the presider and their response, which begins the service. Its purpose is to bring the congregation corporately into dialogue with the presider and set a tone for the celebration.-

Priest: Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.
People: **Glory to God for ever and ever.**

Collect for Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Priest and People:

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. **Amen.****

-A Collect is a short prayer with a specific structure. Its purpose is to gather into one the individual prayers of the People. The Collect of the Day is a specific prayer that reflects upon the lectionary readings for the given day of the liturgical year.-

The Collect of the Day

Priest: God be with you.
People: **And also with you.**
Priest: Let us pray.

O God, you have taught us to keep all your commandments by loving you and our neighbor: Grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit, that we may be devoted to you with our whole heart, and united to one another with pure affection; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

THE LESSONS

The First Reading Zechariah 9:9-12

Reader: Mark Bridgeford

A Reading from the Book of Zechariah.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He

will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

-The Book of Common Prayer has always placed great importance on the Psalms in worship. They are sung or said in every service of the church, and their words make up the petitions and language of our liturgy. —

Psalm 145:8-15

Reader: Marianne Zinkewicz

8 The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, *
slow to anger and of great kindness.

9 The Lord is loving to everyone *
and his compassion is over all his works.

10 All your works praise you, O Lord, *
and your faithful servants bless you.

11 They make known the glory of your kingdom *
and speak of your power;

12 That the peoples may know of your power *
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; *
your dominion endures throughout all ages.

14 The Lord is faithful in all his words *
and merciful in all his deeds.

15 The Lord upholds all those who fall; *
he lifts up those who are bowed down.

The Second Reading Romans 7:15-25a

Reader: Marianne Zinkewicz

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans.

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

-The Gospel procession moves into the congregation as a liturgical reminder that Jesus walked among us.-

Please stand as you are able.

Gradual LEVAS #101

Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling

Will L. Thompson

1. Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing,
2. Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing,
3. Time is now fleet - ing, the mo - ments are pass - ing,
4. Oh! For the won - der - ful love He has prom - ised,

1. Call - ing for you and for me; — See, on the por - tals He's
2. Plead - ing for you and for me? — Why should we lin - ger and
3. Pass - ing for you and for me; — Shad - ows are gath - er - ing,
4. Prom - ised for you and for me; — Though we have sinned, He has

1. wait - ing and watch - ing, Watch - ing for you and for me. —
2. heed not His mer - cies, Mer - cies for you and for me? —
3. death beds are com - ing, Com - ing for you and for me. —
4. mer - cy and par - don, Par - don for you and for me. —

Come home, Come home, come home, come home,

Ye who are wea-ry, come home! Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,
 Je - sus is call - ing, Call - ing, O sin - ner, come home!

-The Gospel is comprised primarily of the words Christ himself spoke, and so we stand out of reverence for the good news that has been brought for us and all people.

Those who wish, make the sign of the cross with the right-thumb on the forehead, the lips, and the heart when the Gospel is announced, praying silently, God be in my head and in my thinking. God be in my lips and in my speaking. God be in my heart and my departing.-

The Gospel Reading Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People: **Glory to you, O Christ.**

Jesus said to the crowd, "To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Priest: The Gospel of the Savior.

People: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

-The Sermon or Homily helps us apply the words of the early prophets and Christ in our lives.-

A period of silent reflection follows the sermon.

-The Nicene Creed is the statement of what we believe. It is one of the most ancient and corporate confession of our faith, having been adopted by the first ecumenical council in the year 325. When we recite this creed we are joining a great heritage of the holy universal Church through the centuries.

Some people may choose to bow their heads at the verse, For us and for our salvation...and was made man. This gesture marks the mystery of the Incarnation as the central Christian message of God's love for the world.-

Please stand as you are able.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

-Prayer is offered for the Universal Church, the Nation and all in authority, the welfare of the world, concerns of the local community, for those who suffer or who are in any trouble, and for the departed.-

The Prayers of the People

Reader: Caroline Morgan

Friends, let us not grow weary in doing what is right. Let us appeal to God, who is our Strength, praying "Hear, O God, and have mercy upon us.

We ask you, O Lord of the harvest, to send our laborers into your harvest. Grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit, that your Church might freely proclaim, in word and deed, the good news of your Kingdom.

Silence

Intercessor: Hear, O God,

People: And have mercy upon us.

Give us, O God, the opportunity and the will to work for the good of all. Give us hearts for the people you love.

Silence

Intercessor: Hear, O God,

People: And have mercy upon us.

We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. In it we find healing. By it the whole earth is refreshed. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.

Silence

Intercessor: Hear, O God,

People: And have mercy upon us.

Gracious God, we thank you for our freedom. May we use it to bear one another's burdens and to live in peace.

The congregation may add their own thanksgivings.

Silence

Intercessor: Hear, O God,

People: And have mercy upon us.

O God, our helper, you turn wailing into dancing; you dress your children in joy. We pray that you would restore to health all those who cry out to you. We pray for all those on the prayer list, especially Vince, Fran, Karen, Jim, Patrick, Malcolm, David, and Lynn.

The congregation may add their own petitions.

Silence

Intercessor: Hear, O God,

People: And have mercy upon us.

Holy God, it is our joy that you write our names in heaven. In the fullness of time, raise us, with all who have died to eternal life that we might give you thanks forever.

Silence

Intercessor: Hear, O God,

People: And have mercy upon us.

Priest:

A Prayer for Independence Day

God Almighty, you have made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and in peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Holy and Merciful God, open your ears to our call; listen to the cries of our hearts. Accept our prayers and answer them according to your good and perfect will. In the name of Jesus, the Lord of glory, we pray. **Amen.**

Confession

Let us confess our sins to God.

God of all mercy,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. **Amen.**

Absolution

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

-The Peace is an extension of Christian greeting and teaching to love our neighbor as ourselves. It symbolizes our intent to forgive as we are forgiven, to live in peace with all people. Members are encouraged to greet one another with a sign of God's peace with the clasping of hands, a reverential bow, a hug, or a peace sign.-

The Peace

Priest: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Members of the congregation who are joining us via livestream are encouraged to post "Peace be with you" in the comments or to use the "like" or "love" reaction button to take part in the virtual exchange of God's peace with the rest of the congregation at this time.

Please be seated.

Welcome and Announcements

We are pleased to celebrate the following birthdays: Erick Long and Rachel Rieckhoff on July 5th, and Jeremy Hunt, Kyra Stapp and Emily Torres on July 8th. We also celebrate the wedding anniversary of Ginny & Bob Gregor on July 8th.

Offertory Prayer

The People remain seated and say together:

Loving God, you alone are the source of every good gift. Everything we have, and all that we are, comes from you. Now, help us to be grateful, accountable, and, with praise and thanksgiving, to give of ourselves generously, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE TABLE

Offertory

Lift Thine Eyes from *Elijah*

F. Mendelssohn

Kelsey Raub, soprano, Rebecca Wadhold, mezzo-soprano, Sarah Bloxham, alto

-A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself. For Anglicans there are two great sacraments: Eucharist and Baptism.

As continuation of thousands of years of spiritual practice, talent, treasure, and oblations are offered before the altar in our response to God's care and nurture.-

Please stand as you are able.

Doxology

Old 100th

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures,
here be - low. Praise God, you hosts in heav'n a -
bove; Praise God the Trin - i - ty of Love. A - men.

-The Sursum Corda (Lift up your hearts) is a form of introduction to prayer handed down over the centuries. This dialogue is an invitation for the people joining in the Eucharistic offering, to raise minds and hearts to "things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."

Priest: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to God.**

Priest: Let us give thanks.

People: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

-We praise God for the long arc of salvation history. We do not approach with petition but simply with grateful remembrance of all that God has done.-

All thanks and praise are yours at all times and in all places, our true and loving God; through Jesus Christ, your eternal Word, the Wisdom from on high by whom you created all things. You laid the foundations of the world and enclosed the sea when it burst out from the womb; You brought forth all creatures of the earth and gave breath to humankind.

Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing, all you create is a sign of hope for our journey; And so as the morning stars sing your praises we join the heavenly beings and all creation as we shout with joy:

-The holiness of God is a strong theme in the Old Testament, present here in the Sanctus, which echoes the words of the high angels in the prophet Isaiah's vision of the dwelling place of God (Isaiah 6:1-3).

Our worshipful cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy," is coupled with the acclamation "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

Sanctus

Baity

Ho - ly Lord, Ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might, Ho - ly Lord, Ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might... Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry, heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho san-na, ho-san-na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est! Blest is he, blest is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Blest is he, blest is he whocomes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho san-na, ho-san-na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high est. Ho san-na, ho-san-na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho san-na, ho-san-na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est!

Standing or kneeling as you are able.

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all, your Word has never been silent; you called a people to yourself, as a light to the nations, you delivered them from bondage and led them to a land of promise. Of your grace, you gave Jesus to be human, to share our life, to proclaim the coming of your holy reign and give himself for us, a fragrant offering.

Through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, you have freed us from sin, brought us into your life, reconciled us to you, and restored us to the glory you intend for us.

We thank you that on the night before he died for us Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, gave it to his friends and said: "Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper Jesus took the cup of wine, said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said: "Drink this, all of you: this cup is the new Covenant in my Blood, poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And so, remembering all that was done for us: the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and ascension, longing for Christ's coming in glory, and presenting to you these gifts your earth has formed and human hands have made, we acclaim you, O Christ:

Priest and People

Dying, you destroyed our death.

Rising, you restored our life.

Christ Jesus, come in glory!

-The epiclesis is the point at which the church, through the voice of the Celebrant, asks God to make holy, 'sanctify', 'send', 'pour', 'breathe', both the gift of bread and wine and also the gathered community.-

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine that they may be to us the Body and Blood of your Christ. Grant that we, burning with your Spirit's power, may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ, and in the fullness of time gather us with blessed Stephen, and all your people, into the joy of our true eternal home.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, we worship you our God and Creator in voices of unending praise.

Priest and People

Blessed are you now and for ever. AMEN.

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen**

The Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

-The fraction (breaking of the bread) is a crucial link between what has come before and what comes after it. Christ has offered his life for us, and the breaking of the bread makes it possible for all to share in that life.-

Priest: Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People: **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

-The outward and visible sign in the sacrament of the Eucharist is the bread and the wine. We eat and drink the sacramental foods. Through the inward and spiritual grace of this sacramental action we are reconstituted as Christ's body, infused with Christ's life, and empowered to be Christ's presence in the world.-

The Gifts of God for the People of God.
Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

All are welcome to receive communion. The table we set belongs to God. Wherever you find yourself on your spiritual journey you are welcome to receive the Bread and Wine made holy.

The church teaches that temporal isolation cannot constrain the sacrament's ineffable power. Calling us to "massive, corporate, spiritual communion,"

The Invitation to Holy Communion

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

Priest and People say together:

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Please be seated.

Please follow usher instructions for taking communion.

Communion Music

Romance No 1
Sarah Bloxham, oboe

Robert Schumann

-In the post communion prayer we give thanks for the sacramental signs of Christ's presence to us and we ask God to empower and accompany us into the world to witness to God's love.-

Please stand as you are able.

Post Communion Prayer

Let us pray.

Loving God,
we give you thanks
for restoring us in your image
and nourishing us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.
Now send us forth
a people, forgiven, healed, renewed;
that we may proclaim your love to the world
and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.

-The blessing is God's promise to be with us as we leave communal worship and return to the world to serve God and God's people.-

Blessing

Support one another, encourage one another,
Wait for the weak, pick up the fallen.
When you are together, remember what it is like to travel alone.
When you are alone, remember what it is like to travel together.
And wherever you are, may you remember the God who always goes
before you and with you; God Almighty, the one holy and undivided Trinity. **Amen.**

-Processions have long been an important part of liturgical worship. At the conclusion of the service the retiring procession represents the carrying of the Gospel message into the world.

Those who wish to may bow in reverence as the cross passes to acknowledge Christ's sacrifice upon it.-

Closing Hymn #719

"O beautiful for spacious skies"

Materna



1. O beau - ti - ful for spa - cious skies, for am - ber waves of grain,
2. O beau - ti - ful for he - roes proved in lib - er - at - ing strife,
3. O beau - ti - ful for pa - triot dream that sees be - yond the years



for pur - ple moun - tain ma - jes - ties a - bove the fruit - ed plain!
who more than self their coun - try loved, and mer - cy more than life!
thine al - a - bas - ter ci - ties gleam, un - dimmed by hu - man tears!



A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God shed his grace on thee,
A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God mend thine ev - ery flaw,
A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God shed his grace on thee,



and crown thy good with bro - ther-hood from sea to shin - ing sea.
con - firm thy soul in self - con - trol, thy lib - er - ty in law.
and crown thy good with bro - ther-hood from sea to shin - ing sea.

-The dismissal asserts the relationship between worship and living. It is a call to mission, a call to live the baptismal and Eucharistic life in the world.-

The Dismissal

Priest: Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.
People: **Thanks be to God.**