

THE CELEBRATION OF ST. STEPHEN, MARTYR

December 26, 2021, 8:30am

"Changing Lives through Worship, Compassion, and Christian Education"



They all rushed at him [Stephen], dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. (Acts 7:57a-58)

**Music of Preparation,
Welcome, Announcements, Greeting**

Our Ministry: We are a people of God who are: ***"Changing Lives through Worship, Compassion, and Christian Education."***

Welcome! Welcome to worship as we continue to revel in the Christmas season. Friends, we're glad you're here!

Devotions & Publications Available are found in the main entryway. Please leave donation envelopes in the offering plate.

..... **WORSHIP NOTES**

Note About Attendance Cards...Remember that the only way we may know you are worshipping with us is by seeing your name on an attendance card. These cards may be completed as you enter for worship and will be collected after the offering. Use one card for each family that is gathered. ***Please list the name of each person in worship.*** (Parents, please take responsibility for signing in your children) There is a "Member" side as well as a "Guest" side. Please fill out the appropriate side and pass them to the center aisle during the gathering of the offerings. The cards are gathered after the offering has been collected.

To Our Visitors...Our church and school have a few nooks and crannies, so don't be afraid to ask an usher where things are. Our pastor and any member here today would also be glad to meet and assist you. A guest information packet is available near the guest register in the main (west) entryway.

For All Who Worship...If you are arriving after the service has started, please allow our ushers to assist you with seating. We ask that you avoid entering during the confession, prayers, or Bible readings as these are quiet and meditative moments.

For Parents with Small Children...We love and want children in our services as a part of God's family, to spend time with Jesus, and to learn how to worship. We also know that kids can be kids. We want you and your children to experience our Lord's love and to have a great opportunity to worship the Lord along with all who are gathered here to praise our Savior's name.

DIVINE SERVICE, SETTING ONE

(The music for the liturgy may be found on page 151 in the Hymnal)

Notes for Worship: As you prepare for worship this day, we invite you to turn to the prayer section of the Hymnal (page 305). In addition to prayers for before and after worship, there are prayers for all aspects of the Christian Life (some of the prayers are also located on the inside front cover of the hymnal). May these prayers be useful in your worship.

Before worship prayer - Faithful God, whose mercies are new to us every morning, we humbly pray that You would look upon us in mercy and renew us by Your Holy Spirit. Keep safe our going out and our coming in, and let Your blessing remain with us throughout this day. Preserve us in Your righteousness and grant us a portion in that eternal life which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. AMEN.

We're So Glad God Brought You Here Today!

Opening Hymn: "Jerusalem the Golden"

LSB, hymn #672

Jerusalem the golden, With milk and honey blest—
The promise of salvation, The place of peace and rest—
We know not, oh, we know not What joys await us there:
The radiancy of glory, The bliss beyond compare!

Within those walls of Zion Sounds forth the joyful song,
As saints join with the angels And all the martyr throng.
The Prince is ever with them; The daylight is serene;
The city of the blessed Shines bright with glorious sheen.

Around the throne of David, The saints, from care released,
Raise loud their songs of triumph To celebrate the feast.
They sing to Christ their leader, Who conquered in the fight,
Who won for them forever Their gleaming robes of white.

O sweet and blessed country, The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country That faithful hearts expect!
In mercy, Jesus, bring us To that eternal rest
With You and God the Father And Spirit, ever blest.

P: In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.** *Matthew 28:19b*

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C: **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** *1 John 1:8-9*

P: Dear Friends in Christ, let us humble our hearts before our Holy God and silently reflect upon our sins.

(Moment of silent reflection)

P: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C: **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen**

P: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit. *John 20:19-23*

C: **Amen.**

KYRIE ~ Lord, Have Mercy

Mark 10:47

P: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C: **(Sung) Lord, have mercy.**

P: For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

C: **(Sung) Lord, have mercy.**

P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

C: **(Sung) Lord, have mercy.**

P: For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

C: **(Sung) Lord, have mercy.**

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: **(Sung) Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

Gloria in Excelsis ~Glory to God in the Highest

Luke 2:14, John 1:29

P: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

C: **(Sung) 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**

P: The Lord be with you.

2 Timothy 4:22

C: **(Sung) And also with you.**

P: Let us pray . . . Heavenly Father, in the midst of our sufferings for the sake of Christ grant us grace to follow the example of the first martyr, Stephen, that we also may look to the One who suffered and as crucified on our behalf and pray for those who do us wrong; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

C: **Amen**

(Please be Seated)

THE READING OF THE WORD

Old Testament Lesson: 2 Chronicles 24:17–22

(God's Servant Is Killed)

Now after the death of Jehoiada the princes of Judah came and paid homage to the king. Then the king listened to them. And they abandoned the house of the Lord, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols. And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs. Yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the Lord. These testified against them, but they would not pay attention. Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest,

and he stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God, 'Why do you break the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, he has forsaken you.'" But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the Lord. Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah's father, had shown him, but killed his son. And when he was dying, he said, "May the Lord see and avenge!"

Old Testament Psalm: Psalm 119:137-144 *(God's Righteousness Is Everlasting)*

Righteous are you, O LORD, and your laws are right. The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy. My zeal wears me out, for my enemies ignore your words. Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them. Though I am lowly and despised, I do not forget your precepts. Your righteousness is everlasting and your law is true. Trouble and distress have come upon me, but your commands are my delight. Your statutes are forever right; give me understanding that I may live.

Epistle Lesson: Acts 6:8-7:2a, 51-60

(Stephen Is Martyred)

Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called) - Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke. Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God." So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us." All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. Then the high priest asked him, "Are these charges true?" To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. . . . "You

stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him - you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it." When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Stand

Alleluia and Verse - Common

John 6:68

C: (Sung) Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, alleluia.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-third chapter.

C: (Sung) Glory to You, O Lord.

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 23:34-39

(Jesus Laments Over Jerusalem)

Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: (Sung) Praise to You, O Christ.

(Please be Seated)

Sermon Hymn: "By All Your Saints in Warfare"

LSB, hymn #517

By all Your saints in warfare, Your holy name, O Jesus, For You have won the battle And now they shine in glory	For all Your saints at rest, Forevermore be blest! That they might wear the crown; Reflected from Your throne.
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7 - St. Stephen, Martyr (December 26)

Praise for the first of martyrs To help in time of torment, Like You, our suffering Savior, With "Lord, receive my spirit,"	Who saw You ready stand To plead at God's right hand. His enemies he blessed, His faith, by death, confessed.
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Then let us praise the Father And sing to God the Spirit, Till all the ransomed number Ascribing pow'r and glory	And worship God the Son Eternal Three in One, Fall down before the throne, And praise to God alone.
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Sermon: "Follow The Example"

Acts 6:8-7:2a

Stand

P: Let us confess our faith, using the words of the Apostles' Creed.

C: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

(Please be Seated)

Tithes and Offerings/Attendance Cards

OFFERTORY - Create In Me

LSB, Divine Service 3, pg 192-193

C: (Sung) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free spirit.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

1 Timothy 2:1-4

P: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

With hearts made joyful by Your blessed nativity, Lord Jesus, we are bold to bring to Your throne of grace our supplications and intercessions. We bless You for the witness of Stephen, whose service and martyrdom we remember today. We ask You to grant us wisdom and courage to meet the challenges of our lives of faith as we live them out each day. Lord, In Your Mercy,

C: Hear Our Prayer.

P: In this time of welcoming the Prince of Peace, we pray for the world in which we live. May we seek to bring true and lasting peace and justice in all our speaking and our doing. Lord, In Your Mercy,

C: Hear Our Prayer.

P: Also, we pray today for this congregation as the year draws to its close. Bless its leaders and all of the people gathered here with a full measure of dedication and a willingness to speak of Your gracious love to everyone. Lord, In Your Mercy,

C: Hear Our Prayer.

P: We pray for ourselves, that we would live out faithfully what we believe, teach and confess in the coming year and at all times. Lord, In Your Mercy,

C: Hear Our Prayer.

P: As we intercede for others, we pray for those with special needs, whose earthly journeys are difficult. Lord, we remember the sick, the shut-in, and those known to each of us individually who are in need of Your intervention. We pray that you be with those hospitalized this past week (*Epecially, . . .*). Also be with those who continue treatment and healing at home. We pray for

them and all those that we name in our hearts . . . (*Silence*). Enable us to be those who heal, encourage, and strengthen those around us. Lord, In Your Mercy,

C: Hear Our Prayer.

P: Finally, eternal Lord, we thank You for the faithful witness of those whose time on earth is finished, who rejoice with the saints and the angels in Your eternal presence. May we be inspired by their faithful witness and seek to serve You constantly all our days. Lord, In Your Mercy,

C: Hear Our Prayer.

(Additional prayers of the congregation. Each petition concludes with. . .)

P: . . . Lord, In Your Mercy,

C: Hear Our Prayer.

P: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has taught us to pray:

C: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen

BENEDICTION

P: The LORD bless you and keep you.

The LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The LORD look upon you with favor and † give you peace.

C: (Sung) Amen

Closing Hymn: "What Child Is This"

LSB, hymn #370

What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies He in such mean estate Where ox and ass are feeding?
 Good Christian, fear; for sinners here The silent Word is pleading.
 Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you;
 Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the son of Mary!

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peasant, king, to own Him.
 The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
 Raise, raise the song on high, The virgin sings her lullaby;
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mary!

See You In Worship Next Week!

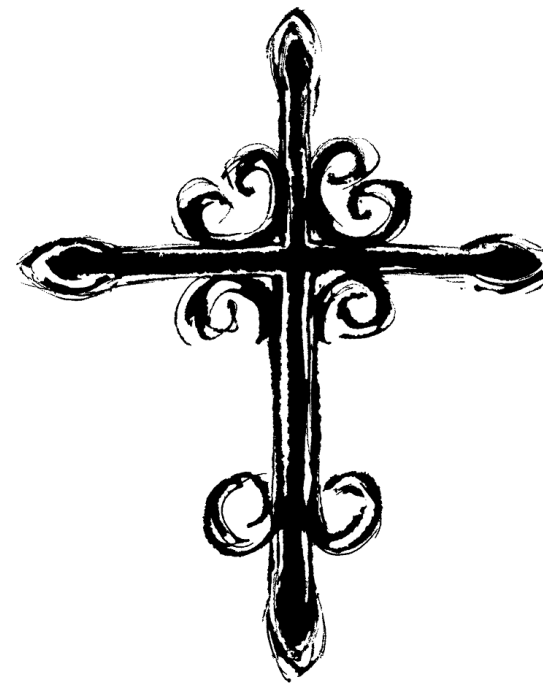
After worship prayer

Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom which comes down from above, that Your Word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, that in steadfast faith we may serve You and in the confession of Your name abide unto the end; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

There is a Prayer Ministry Member(s) in each service that is wearing a prayer ministry tag around their neck. Please look for them if you want a prayer for someone else, a concern or situation you may have, or yourself.

Please join us for coffee and donut holes in the cafeteria after Sunday services.

Altar Flowers Altar flowers for Christmas are given in loving memory of our parents George and Edith Lueth, by Jerry & June Hoekstra, Jim & Jenny Mossman and Rod & Alexis Lueth and families.



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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