

This son
of mine
was dead
and is
**alive
again!**

LUKE 15:24

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

everything between **lost & found**

Sunday March 30, 2025—10am

WELCOME AND A NOTE TO VISITORS

Welcome to people new to this church or faith, long time Lutherans, and Christians from every tradition. Welcome to all who have no church home, want to follow Christ, have doubts, or do not believe. Welcome to new visitors and old friends. Welcome to people of every age and size, color and culture, sexual orientation and marital status, ability and challenge. Welcome to believers and questioners and questioning believers. This is a place where you are welcome to celebrate and sorrow, rejoice and recover. This is a place where lives are made new. Welcome on this day.

Music “A Lent Message in Song” Richard Anderson

The Gathering

Call to worship

Our God is a shepherding God.

Our God knows us by name.

Our God will never stop searching for us.

So if you feel lost,

then know that God is seeking you.

If you feel found,

then know that God will never leave.

This is the promise of scripture.

This is the promise of God’s love.

Let us worship our with-us God.

Call to confession

Friends, in the Christian tradition many have used “lost” and “found” labels to describe people “out there” versus people “in here.”

Many have used “lost” and “found” language to create a damaging dichotomy that Christians are found

and non-Christians are lost.

But the truth is, each and every one of us is a little bit lost
and a little bit found from time to time.

Each and every one of us needs the love of the Good Shepherd.

So join me in the prayer of confession,
as people who know both ends of that spectrum.

Join me as we go to God in prayer:

Prayer of confession

If God is a painter,
let us be the brush.

If God is a musician,
let us be the song.

If God is an architect,
let us be the tools.

Let us be the hands.

Let us be the builders.

But if God is a shepherd,
who never stops seeking,
**let us be willing to be found,
no matter how lost we feel.**

Our God is never far away.

Forgive us for forgetting this good news. Amen.

Words of forgiveness

Family of faith, we are all a little bit lost and a little bit found.

We grumble. We push back. We doubt God. We doubt ourselves.

We leave the flock and lose our way.

But fortunately for us, our God is a shepherding God
who is always by our side.

So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

**No matter how far we wander,
we can never wander from the bounds of God's grace.**

We are loved. We are forgiven. We are not alone.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Prayer for illumination

Shepherding God,
You look for us.
You search for us.
You turn every corner
and climb every mountain.
You call our name until your voice is hoarse.
When we lose our way,
you never stop seeking after us.
So once again we pray,
find us in this moment.
Look for us.
And then surround us with your presence,
so that we might feel you near.
With hope we pray,
with hope we listen.
Amen.

*Opening Hymn

“God Bestows on Every Sense” Blue ACS #1069

God bestows on ev’ry sense
beauty as hope’s evidence:
Signs of what the earth will be
just beyond what we can see.

Catch a fleeting glimpse of grace
In an unexpected place;
Just a taste, the smallest crumb
Of the banquet yet to come.

Vibrant pictures in our dreams,
Brushed with crystal color schemes,
Vanish from a waking mind,
Leaving just a trace behind.₄

In a burnt and blackened field
Broken ground begins to yield
Tiny, fragile sprouts of green;
Hints of forests yet unseen.

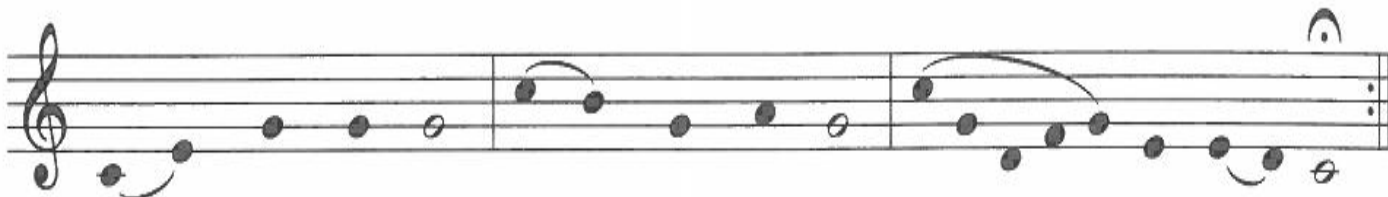
God makes all creation new,
Turning back what people do,
Building up what we destroy,
Singing sorrow into joy.

*Greeting

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

Kyrie—We bring our burdens, cares and hopes for God’s mercy.



1. Lord, have mer-cy.	Lord, have mer-cy.	Lord, have mer-cy.
2. Christ, have mer-cy.	Christ, have mer-cy.	Christ, have mer-cy.
3. Lord, have mer-cy.	Lord, have mer-cy.	Lord, have mer-cy.

*Prayer of the Day

Celebrate insert pg. 1

P: May God be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray...

C: (following the prayer) **Amen.**

The Word of God

God Stories

First Reading Joshua 5:9-12 Celebrate pg. 1

L: Holy Wisdom. Holy Word.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Psalm 32 Celebrate pg. 2

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 Celebrate pg. 3

L: Holy Wisdom. Holy Word.

C: Thanks be to God.

*Gospel Acclamation—Leader sings first, then all together.

After the Gospel, all sing together twice.

GOSPEL

Cantor, then All

Glo-ry to you, Word of God, Lord Je - sus Christ.

Glo-ry to you, Word of God, Lord Je - sus Christ.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 15th Chapter

C: Glory to you, O God.

*Gospel Reading Luke 15:1-32 Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ. (Sing “Glory to you...” twice)

Sermon

Rev. James P. Lapp

*Hymn of the Day

“What is the World Like”

Blue ACS #1047

What is this world like when God’s will is done?
Mustard seeds grow more than we can conceive:
Roots thread the soil;
Branches reach for the sun.
This is how God moves us each to believe.

What is the world like when God’s will is done?
Witness the wandering children coming home;
Watch as the parent breaks into a run.
This is how God longs for us when we roam.

What is the world like when God’s will is done?
No more is neighbor just ally or friend;
Peace thrives in places where once there was none.
This is how God works when rivalries end.

What is the world like when God’s will is done?
Ready for feasting, we watch through the night,
tending our lamps till the new days’ begun.
This is how God readies us for the light.

These are the stories that Jesus imparts,
Filled with the Spirit who joins us as one.
Born through our voices, our hands, and our hearts,
This is a new world where God’s will is done.

Affirmation of faith

We believe in a seeking God,
a with-us and before-us God,
a chasing-after-us God.

We believe that no matter where we wander
or what mountains we climb, *this* God—
the God who walked the streets of Jerusalem,
shook hands with lepers,
patted children on the head,
and told stories of love—
is always close at hand.

So on the good days and the hard days,
on the mountains and in the valleys,
we believe that we are always being found.
Thanks be to God for a love like that.
Amen.

*The Prayers of the Church

Celebrate, Page 4

*Passing of the Peace

P: May the peace of God be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

The Communion Meal

Offering — We honor and worship God by returning some of
the gifts with which we have been blessed.

Music

Psalm 32

Good News Singers

*Offering Prayer

C: **Gracious Provider,**

You have set your immense treasures among us,

**Opening your heart to the world.
As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love,
Deepen our commitment
to sharing those treasures with others.
Through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

A Prayer of Invocation

God meets us in the night—
**before the sun rises,
before the wound heals,
before there are answers,
before there is closure.**

God meets us in the light—
**where joy is effervescent,
where laughter is contagious,
where flowers bloom from cracks in the sidewalk,
where people gather around tables.**

God meets us in between—
**at the edge of the water,
at the beginning of the wilderness,
at the start of something new,
on the edge of faith.**

And if God meets us in all those places,
**then surely God meets us everywhere—
at the water's edge, at the start of something new,
after the baptism, and in the bread and cup.**

We are not alone. God is all around.
Let us worship the God of everything.

*Great Thanksgiving

P: May God be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to God.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Eucharistic Prayer

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy.....

*Words of Institution

*Lord's Prayer

**C: 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 forever. Amen**

Invitation to Communion

P: All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread.

Holy Communion — ALL, Yes — EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Communion is by intinction, we dip the bread into either the wine (red) or grape juice (white).

AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world,
Repeat as needed Last time
have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Communion Hymn

*“Sometimes Our Only Song is Weeping”
Blue ACS #1050*

Sometimes our only song is weeping;
Our only sound is gasping breath.
Sometimes it seems that God is sleeping
While our brief lives are bound in death.
Who hears the song our sorrows swallow
And offers hope to calm our fears?
When all our words seem frail and hollow,
God heeds the prayers within our tears.

Sometimes we catch the faintest humming,
A far-off tune our hearts know well.
Sometimes we sense the Spirit coming.
Our song returns; our voices swell.
The Spirit sings though we are shaken,
And Christ shared our heartfelt cries.
Restored, our weary souls awaken
To join God’s song that never dies.

*Communion Blessing

P: May this Holy Communion of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us in God's grace now and forever.

C: Amen.

*Prayer After Communion

P: Generous Host, You have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

The Sending

Blessing

P: As you leave this place,
may you find God in every messy middle.
May you know that the world is bigger than two sides.
May you trust that you are made in the image of God,
and therefore, you contain multitudes.
So may you move through this world with an open heart,
with a curious mind,
and with the confidence that you do not go alone.
God is with you in the mountains, in the valleys,
and everywhere in between.
Believe that good news, and go in peace.
C: Amen.

*Closing Hymn *"My Life Flows on in Endless Song"*
Red #763

**My life flows on in endless song;
above earth's lamentation
I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn
that hails a new creation.**

REFRAIN

No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?

Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear that music ringing.
It finds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing? REFRAIN

What though my joys and comforts die?
The lord my Savior liveth.
What though the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth. REFRAIN

The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
A fountain ever springing.
All things are mine since I am his!
How can I keep from singing? REFRAIN

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

“Return to God”

music, Thomas Tallis 1505~1585

Serving Today

Reader: Mark Linder

Coffee Host:

Altar Guild: Tina Gates



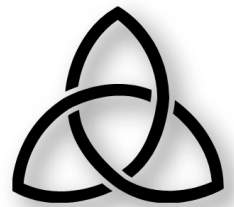
Long Range Task Force Small Group Meetings

Today at 11:30 a
and
Thurs. April 3 at 7:00 p

Plan to gather for these important conversations as we begin to plan for our ministry in the next 5 years.

Trinity Tuesday

April 1st (No Foolin') at 6:30pm



Place: Discretion Brewing 41st Ave.

1 HOUR 1 QUESTION 1 DRINK (3-in-1)

Bring your deepest questions about:

- God, Faith, and the Biblical narrative
- The big questions that keep you up at night

Come with:

- An open mind
- A willingness to engage in respectful dialogue

*Join the conversation. Challenge your assumptions.
Deepen your understanding.*

All viewpoints welcome. Come as you are.

Questions: Call Kathy Allen at 831-430-6359
or email allen.kj@comcast.net

Upcoming Events:

March Benevolence Offering — Scholarship Fund

Easter Lilies for sale today through April 10

- TODAY Long Range Meetings 11:30 am
- April 1—11 Preschool & Kitchen Closed
- April 1 Boy Scouts 6:00 pm
- April 1 Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm Discretion Brew
- April 2 Lent Souper 6:00 pm**
Hosts: Christa & Sam Garcia
Worship 7:00 pm
- April 3 Mens beginner A.A. Thurs. 7:00 pm Fireside
- April 3 Long Range Meeting 7:00 pm
- April 4 A.A. Fridays 7:00 pm NOT Fellowship Hall
- April 13 Palm Sunday Dramatic Worship—readers pls
And Kitchen Dedication
- April 17 Maundy Thursday 11:00 am & 7:00 pm
(LUNCH hosted by MMRR)
- April 18 Good Friday 11:00 am 7:00 pm
- April 19 Easter set up 10 am
- April 20 Easter Breakfast & celebration— help needed

Pastor's Office Hours: Weds. & Thur. 10:00—1:00 pm

Our Mission Statement

St. Stephen's is a welcoming, healing community who worship God in Christ, nurture people growing in faith, serve others with acceptance and love, invite people to share the joy of the spirit.

Reconciling in Christ

"We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status.

We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ."

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Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp
Church Musician: Gary Roberts
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens
Custodian: John Hopping
Videographers: Kent Madsen & Barb Rice

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