

Sunday, April 18, 2021

Stephen's Witness



BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MALMO

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Church Secretary: Mary Braun

Ministers: All Members of the Congregation

MISSION STATEMENT

*We will **LIVE** and **SERVE** through **FAITH***

*we will **ACT** with **LOVE** and **KINDNESS***

*we will **GIVE** hope and **SUPPORT** to all.*

INTRODUCTION: *What might it look like for us to bear testimony to Christ in ways that are spoken of in today's reading that would evoke in us St. Stephen's courage and clarity? What might it look like for us to be the congregation that grieves the loss of someone like St. Stephen and fear that we might be next?*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN

“Alleluia! Sing to Jesus”

#392 ELW



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Sing to Je - sus; his the scep - ter,
2 Al - le - lu - ia! Not as or - phans are we left in
3 Al - le - lu - ia! Bread of heav - en, here on earth our
4 Al - le - lu - ia! King e - ter - nal, Lord om - nip - o -
5 Al - le - lu - ia! Sing to Je - sus; his the scep - ter,



his the throne; Al - le - lu - ia! his the tri - umph, his the
sor - row now; Al - le - lu - ia! he is near us; faith be -
food, our stay; Al - le - lu - ia! here the sin - ful flee to
tent we own; Al - le - lu - ia! born of Mar - y, earth your
his the throne; Al - le - lu - ia! his the tri - umph, his the



vic - to - ry a - lone. Hark! The songs of peace - ful
lieves, nor ques - tions how. Though the cloud from sight re -
you from day to day. In - ter - ces - sor, friend of
foot - stool, heav'n your throne. As with - in the veil you
vic - to - ry a - lone. Hark! The songs of peace - ful



Zi - on thun - der like a might - y flood: “Je - sus
ceived him when the for - ty days were o'er, shall our
sin - ners, earth's re - deem - er, hear our plea where the
en - tered, robed in flesh, our great high priest, here on
Zi - on thun - der like a might - y flood: “Je - sus



out of ev - 'ry na - tion has re - deemed us by his blood.”
hearts for - get his prom - ise: “I am with you ev - er - more”?
songs of all the sin - less sweep a - cross the crys - tal sea.
earth both priest and vic - tim in the eu - cha - ris - tic feast.
out of ev - 'ry na - tion has re - deemed us by his blood.”

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ,
let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

We thank you, risen Christ, for these waters where you make us new, leading us from death to life, from tears to joy. We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us in the grace-filled waters of rebirth, like rains to our thirsting earth, like streams that revive our souls, like cups of cool water shared with strangers. Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear. Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness. Send us companions on our journey as we share your life. Make us one, risen Christ. Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life. To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God, now and forever.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy Giver and Receiver of life,

Your martyr, Stephen, shined with the light of your Holy Spirit. When his opponents took his life, he offered up his spirit to you, and prayed mercy for theirs. Make Stephen an example of faith and courage for all your followers, for the sake of the one who brought light and life to this world, Jesus Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

FIRST READING: Acts 6:1-7:2a, 44-60

6 Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. ²And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, ⁴while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." ⁵What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

⁸Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the

people. ⁹Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. ¹⁰But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. ¹¹Then they secretly instigated some men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” ¹²They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. ¹³They set up false witnesses who said, “This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; ¹⁴for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us.” ¹⁵And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

⁷ Then the high priest asked him, “Are these things so?” ²And Stephen replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, ⁴⁴“Our ancestors had the tent of testimony in the wilderness, as God directed when he spoke to Moses, ordering him to make it according to the pattern he had seen. ⁴⁵Our ancestors in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our ancestors. And it was there until the time of David, ⁴⁶who found favor with God and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. ⁴⁷But it was Solomon who built a house for him. ⁴⁸Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands; as the prophet says, ⁴⁹“Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? ⁵⁰Did not my hand make all these things?”

⁵¹“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. ⁵²Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. ⁵³You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.”

⁵⁴When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. ⁵⁵But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶“Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” ⁵⁷But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the

witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God

Gospel: Luke 23:33-34a, 46

³³When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ⁴⁶Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Having said this, he breathed his last.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God

SERMON

HYMN: “Lord You Give the Great Commission” #579 ELW (INSERT)

THE APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

PRAYERS of INTERCESSION

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

A brief silence.

Living God, in the midst of Easter joy we are still filled with questions and wondering. Open our hearts and minds as we encounter the scriptures, so that the

church embodies repentance and forgiveness in the name of Jesus to all nations.
Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creating God, like a master artist you have fashioned the universe out of your love and delight. Heal your creation where it is in need of restoration. Provide all the inhabitants of earth a peaceful and sustainable home. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of all, the nations hunger and thirst for your righteousness. Many call on you for guidance and strength. Answer their hopes with the peace of Christ and give your lovingkindness to national, state, and local leaders of people. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Healing God, you hear the cries of those in need and answer them in their distress. Grant to those who are sick and suffering your compassion and nurse them back to health and wholeness. Be close to the hearts of the lonely. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Loving Parent, you have given us such love that we should be called the children of God. Reveal yourself to us so that we in this community of faith will become more and more like you in our mutual love and bold witness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of all times and ages, those who have died in you now see you as you are. We thank you for their lives among us. Assure us of the peace you have promised, that we may join them in everlasting life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of love,

you call us beloved children and welcome us to your table. Receive our lives and the gifts we offer. Abide with us and send us in service to a suffering world; for the sake of your beloved Child, Jesus Christ. Amen

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD’S PRAYER

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The risen Christ invites us to this table. Come, eat and be satisfied.

PRAYER after COMMUNION

Wellspring of joy,

through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

BLESSING

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen

HYMN: “Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing” #389 ELW (INSERT)

DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Response to God’s Word Last Week:

Sunday, April 11, 2021 - In Person: 54

Virtual Attendance *: 12

**Virtual attendance is based on a matrix from the NEMN Synod. We determine the number of unique views per week and multiply by 2 – assuming there are two people per household watching the service.*

THIS WEEK AT Bethesda

April 19, 2021 – April 25, 2021

April 19	Monday	11:30am	Pinochle
		10:00am	Council Meeting
		7:00pm	AA/Alanon Meetings
April 21	Wednesday	9-Noon	WIC
		9:30am	WELCA Meeting
April 25	Sunday	9:30 am	In-Person Worship Service

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER & CARE LIST: Jenny Schuett's brother, Dave.

“USHERS NEEDED” Contact Skip Hansen if you are available.

BETHESDA QUILTERS need donations of clean used mattress pads, flannel sheets or blankets to make Lutheran World Relief quilts. Please leave in the Fellowship Hall by the Quilter's Door. Many Thanks.

VEGGIE STAND Calling all gardeners and bakers. There are plans for Bethesda's Veggie Stand to be open at least on a limited basis this summer. This spring, plant seedlings as well as rhubarb, bulbs, perennials, jelly and baked goods will be sold. So if you are starting plants and have extra or are thinning your perennials, plan to bring them to the veggie stand. The goal is to open mid-May. All proceeds to benefit local food shelves and local benevolences. If you have any questions or want to help, contact Jim Christensen at 320-279-0962.

ALUMINUM CANS price is up on recycled aluminum thru the month of April! Bring in your cans to church for recycling. Money goes to local benevolence.

STUFFED ANIMALS The Malmo Lions are collecting new or gently used stuffed animals. Please bring to the church attention Sherry Whipple.

HELP WANTED - Position-Church Custodian

The primary purpose of the Custodian position is to provide a clean and welcoming church facility to support the congregation's mission and ministries.

Qualifications:

1. Light to moderate physical work abilities with knowledge of maintenance, tools, and equipment.
2. Knowledge of custodial materials/chemicals, with the a
3. Ability to work with minimum supervision.

Time Requirement:

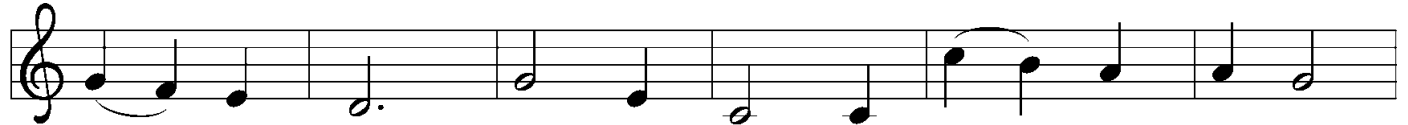
Under normal conditions this position will average approximately 8-10 hours per week. The custodian will report directly to the property committee chairperson or church council representative. Application & Job Description available in the office. Contact Julie Swaggert with any questions.



“Lord You Give the Great Commission” #579 ELW



1 Lord, you give the great com - mis - sion: “Heal the sick and
 2 Lord, you call us to your ser - vice: “In my name bap -
 3 Lord, you make the com - mon ho - ly: “This my bod - y,
 4 Lord, you show us love’s true mea - sure: “Fa - ther, what they
 5 Lord, you bless with words as - sur - ing: “I am with you



preach the word.” Lest the church ne - glect its mis - sion,
 tize and teach.” That the world may trust your prom - ise,
 this my blood.” Let us all, for earth’s true glo - ry,
 do, for - give.” Yet we hoard as pri - vate trea - sure
 to the end.” Faith and hope and love re - stor - ing,



and the gos - pel go un - heard, help us wit - ness
 life a - bun - dant meant for each, give us all new
 dai - ly lift life heav - en - ward, ask - ing that the
 all that you so free - ly give. May your care and
 may we serve as you in - tend and, a - mid the



to your pur - pose with re - newed in - teg - ri - ty:
 fer - vor, draw us clos - er in com - mu - ni - ty:
 world a - round us share your chil - dren’s lib - er - ty:
 mer - cy lead us to a just so - ci - e - ty:
 cares that claim us, hold in mind e - ter - ni - ty:

Refrain



With the Spir - it’s gifts em - pow’r us for the work of min - is - try.

“Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing”

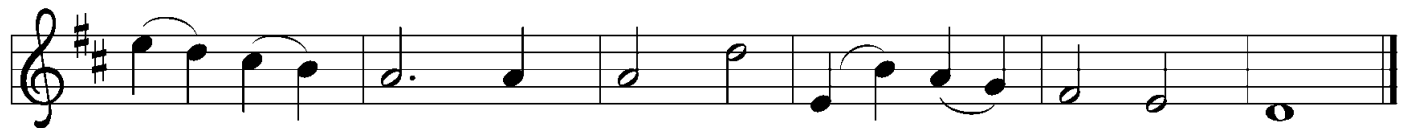
#389 ELW



1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing. The cross stands
 2 Christ is a - live! No long - er bound to dis - tant
 3 In ev - 'ry in - sult, rift, and war, where col - or,
 4 Wom - en and men, in age and youth, can feel the
 5 Christ is a - live, and comes to bring good news to



emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with
 years in Pal - es - tine, but sav - ing, heal - ing,
 scorn, or wealth di - vide, Christ suf - fers still, yet
 Spir - it, hear the call, and find the way, the
 this and ev - 'ry age, till earth and sky and



prais - es ring. Love, drowned in death, shall nev - er die.
 here and now, and touch - ing ev - 'ry place and time.
 loves the more, and lives, where e - ven hope has died.
 life, the truth, re - vealed in Je - sus, freed for all.
 o - cean ring with joy, with jus - tice, love, and praise.