



ST. STEPHEN'S

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF RIDGEFIELD

*Belonging
with purpose*

Our Mission: Embracing and living God's commandment to love our neighbors through worship, stewardship, and service to others.

The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 23, 2026 • 10:00 A.M.

Prelude and Welcome

All stand and join in singing Hymn 522

1 Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
he whose word cannot be broken
formed thee for his own abode;
on the Rock of Ages founded,
what can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

2 See! the streams of living waters,
springing from eternal love,
well supply thy sons and daughters
and all fear of want remove.
Who can faint, when such a river
ever will their thirst assuage?
Grace which, like the Lord, the giver,
never fails from age to age.

3 Round each habitation hovering,
see the cloud and fire appear
for a glory and a covering,
showing that the Lord is near.
Thus deriving from their banner,
light by night, and shade by day,
safe they feed upon the manna
which he gives them when they pray.

4 Blest inhabitants of Zion,
washed in the Redeemer's blood!
Jesus, whom their souls rely on,
makes them kings and priests to God.
'Tis his love his people raises
over self to reign as kings:
and as priests, his solemn praises
each for a thank-offering brings.

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.
Amen.**

Austria

All join in The 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 Lord. Amen.

*At this time, children are invited to follow
Storytime Leaders down to the Choir Room.*

All sing the Song of Praise

Thaxted

O— God be-yond all prai-sing, we wor-ship you to-
day and sing the love a - ma - zing that
songs can-not re - pay; for— we can on-ly won-der at—
ev - ery gift you send, at— bless-ings with-out
num - ber and mer-cies with - out end: we—
lift our hearts be - fore— you and wait up-on your
word, we— ho - nor and a -
dore— you, our great and migh - ty Lord.

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray. Grant, O merciful God, that your Church, being gathered together in unity by your Holy Spirit, may show forth your power among all peoples, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

All sit for **A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul
to the Romans**

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God-- what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Romans 12:1-8

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

A Portion of Psalm 138 *said by all*

- 1 **I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart; *
before the gods I will sing your praise.**
- 2 **I will bow down toward your holy temple
and praise your Name, *
because of your love and faithfulness;**
- 3 **For you have glorified your Name *
and your word above all things.**
- 4 **When I called, you answered me; *
you increased my strength within me.**
- 5 **All the kings of the earth will praise you, O Lord, *
when they have heard the words of your mouth.**
- 6 **They will sing of the ways of the Lord, *
that great is the glory of the Lord.**
- 7 **Though the Lord be high, he cares for the lowly; *
he perceives the haughty from afar.**

- 8 **Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; *
you stretch forth your hand
against the fury of my enemies;
your right hand shall save me.**
- 9 **The Lord will make good his purpose for me; *
O Lord, your love endures for ever;
do not abandon the works of your hands.**

All stand and sing **Sequence Hymn 521**

Chelsea Square

- 1 Put forth, O God, thy Spirit's might
and bid thy Church increase,
in breadth and length, in depth and height,
her unity and peace.
- 2 Let works of darkness disappear
before thy conquering light;
let hatred and tormenting fear
pass with the passing night.
- 3 Let what apostles learned of thee
be ours from age to age;
their steadfast faith our unity,
their peace our heritage.
- 4 O Judge divine of human strife!
O Vanquisher of pain!
To know thee is eternal life,
to serve thee is to reign.

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. *Matthew 16:13-20*

Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon The Rev'd Whitney F. Altopp, D.Min.

A moment for reflection follows the sermon.

All stand for **The 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.

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray to the Lord.

People Lord, hear us.

All kneel for **The Confession of Sin**

Celebrant Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

People Most merciful God,
we confess that 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 are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

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

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

Offertory Sentence

Celebrant Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good thy vows unto the Most High.

Psalm 50:14

Offertory

All stand for the **Presentation Hymn** *Old Hundredth*

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him, all creatures here below,
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

The Great Thanksgiving *Book of Common Prayer p. 367*

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People It is right to give him thanks and praise.
It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. *The Celebrant prays a Proper Preface.* Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and
might, heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is
he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho -
san - na in the high - est.

All stand or kneel as the Celebrant continues and ends with
 Therefore, according to his command, O Father,
All **We remember his death,**
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues and ends with
 And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we
 are bold to say,
People **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, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

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

Fraction Anthem

ANTIPHON

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Christ our Pass - ov - er is sa - cri - ficed for us:

there - fore let us keep the feast.

REPEAT ANTIPHON

Celebrant The Gifts of God for the people of God.

All join in singing **Communion Hymn 671** *New Britain*

- 1 Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.
- 2 'Twas grace first taught my heart to fear
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!
- 3 The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

- 4 Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.
- 5 When we've been there ten thousand years
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we first begun.

All kneel for the **Prayer After Communion**

Celebrant Let us pray.

All **Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have**
graciously accepted us as living members of your
Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us
with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body
and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage to love and
serve you with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

The Priest pronounces God's blessing and all respond **Amen.**

All stand and sing **Hymn 705**

Forest Green

- 1 As those of old their first fruits brought
of vineyard, flock, and field
to God, the giver of all good,
the source of bounteous yield;
so we today our first fruits bring,
the wealth of this good land,
of farm and market, shop and home,
of mind, and heart, and hand.
- 2 A world in need now summons us
to labor, love, and give;
to make our life an offering
to God that all may live;
the Church of Christ is calling us
to make the dream come true:
a world redeemed by Christ-like love;
all life in Christ made new.
- 3 With gratitude and humble trust
we bring our best to thee
to serve thy cause and share thy love
with all humanity.
O thou who gavest us thyself
in Jesus Christ thy Son,
help us to give ourselves each day
until life's work is done.

Dismissal *Response* Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Postlude

Music Notes

Today's hymns trace a path from the Church gathered and sustained by God to the Church sent into the world in service.

Our opening hymn, **Glorious things of thee are spoken**, takes its imagery from the biblical vision of Zion, the city of God. John Newton's text pictures God's people as a community founded securely upon the "Rock of Ages," nourished by streams of living water, and accompanied by God's presence. Sung to AUSTRIA, the great eighteenth-century tune by Franz Joseph Haydn, it resonates especially with today's Gospel, in which Christ declares, "on this rock I will build my church."

Before the Gospel we sing **Put forth, O God, thy Spirit's might** to CHELSEA SQUARE. The hymn is a prayer for the growth, unity, and peace of the Church—a particularly apt response to St. Paul's image in Romans of the many members who, despite their differing gifts and functions, form "one body in Christ."

At Communion, **Amazing grace** reminds us that Christian life begins and continues not through our own achievement, but through the gift of God. Its familiar tune, NEW BRITAIN, first appeared with the text in nineteenth-century America and has since become inseparable from John Newton's words. The hymn's journey from being lost to being found, through "dangers, toils, and snares," toward our final home gives musical expression to a life continually sustained by grace.

Our closing hymn, **As those of old their first fruits brought**, draws together the themes of today's Epistle and our parish mission. St. Paul calls us to present ourselves to God as a "living sacrifice"; the hymn answers that call by asking us to offer not only material gifts, but the gifts of "mind, and heart, and hand." We leave worship with its challenge before us: "to make our life an offering / to God that all may live." Sung to the English folk tune FOREST GREEN, the hymn turns stewardship into vocation—the offering of our whole selves in loving service to God and neighbor.

Strengthened by Word and Sacrament, we leave worship ready to use our differing gifts as one body in Christ, bearing into the world the grace we have received.



KICKOFF SUNDAY

September 13

Join us for a dynamic start to the new program year!

A pot-luck lunch will follow the service. Bring your favorite main dish, side, salad or dessert. Beverages and paper goods will be provided. Fun and games for ALL ages! Bounce House, Gaga Pit, Giant Jenga, Cornhole and more!!! We look forward to seeing everyone and catching up!

