



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 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 30, 2026 • 10:00 A.M.

Prelude and Welcome

All stand and join in singing Hymn 516

Down Ampney

- 1 Come down, O Love divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardor glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.
- 2 O let it freely burn,
till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
and let thy glorious light
shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.
- 3 And so the yearning strong,
with which the soul will long,
shall far outpass the power of human telling;
for none can guess its grace,
till Love create a place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling.

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.
Amen.

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



Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray. Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; 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**

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. *Romans 12:9-21*

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

A Portion of Psalm 26 *said by all*

- 1 Give judgment for me, O Lord,
for I have lived with integrity; *
I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered.
- 2 Test me, O Lord, and try me; *
examine my heart and my mind.
- 3 For your love is before my eyes; *
I have walked faithfully with you.
- 4 I have not sat with the worthless, *
nor do I consort with the deceitful.
- 5 I have hated the company of evildoers; *
I will not sit down with the wicked.
- 6 I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord, *
that I may go in procession round your altar,
- 7 Singing aloud a song of thanksgiving *
and recounting all your wonderful deeds.
- 8 Lord, I love the house in which you dwell *
and the place where your glory abides.

All stand and sing **Sequence Hymn 675**

- 1 Take up your cross, the Savior said,
if you would my disciple be;
take up your cross with willing heart,
and humbly follow after me.
- 2 Take up your cross, let not its weight
fill your weak spirit with alarm;
his strength shall bear your spirit up,
and brace your heart, and nerve your arm.

- 3 Take up your cross, heed not the shame,
and let your foolish heart be still;
the Lord for you accepted death
upon a cross, on Calvary's hill.
- 4 Take up your cross, then, in his strength,
and calmly every danger brave:
it guides you to abundant life
and leads to victory o'er the grave.
- 5 Take up your cross, and follow Christ,
nor think till death to lay it down;
for only those who bear the cross
may hope to wear the glorious crown.

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

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

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?"

"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." *Matthew 16:21-28*

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.

Bourbon

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, strengthen 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 757**

Music and words on next page

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 474**

Rockingham

- 1 When I survey the wondrous cross
 where the young Prince of Glory died,
 my richest gain I count but loss,
 and pour contempt on all my pride.
- 2 Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
 save in the cross of Christ, my God:
 all the vain things that charm me most,
 I sacrifice them to his blood.
- 3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
 sorrow and love flow mingled down!
 Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
 or thorns compose so rich a crown?
- 4 Were the whole realm of nature mine,
 that were an offering far too small;
 love so amazing, so divine,
 demands my soul, my life, my all.

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

Postlude

Music Notes

Today's music traces a path from divine love to the cost of discipleship. The service opens with **Come down, O Love divine**, Bianco da Siena's great prayer that the Holy Spirit might kindle God's love within us until it transforms our desires and makes the heart a dwelling place for God. Its expansive tune, DOWN AMPNEY, was composed by Ralph Vaughan Williams for *The English Hymnal* of 1906. The hymn anticipates St. Paul's exhortation in today's Epistle: "Let love be genuine... be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord."

Before the Gospel we sing **Take up your cross, the Savior said**. Charles William Everest wrote the text in 1833, when he was only nineteen years old. Its language follows Jesus' words with unusual directness: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." The sturdy American folk-hymn tune BOURBON gives these demanding words a striking simplicity: Christian discipleship is not merely admiration of Christ, but a willingness to follow in the way of the Cross.

At Communion we sing **Will you come and follow me**, a contemporary hymn of discipleship. Each stanza places a question in the voice of Christ—will we follow when called, risk ourselves for others, love the unloved, and allow our lives to be reshaped by Christ? The final stanza turns those questions into the singer’s own response: “Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.” In today’s service, the hymn speaks almost directly from the Gospel’s invitation to “take up their cross and follow me,” while its vision of courageous, self-giving love echoes Paul’s call to genuine love, hospitality, compassion, and peace. Here it is sung to MARY ALEXANDRA, composed by John Hooker.

The service concludes with Isaac Watts’s *When I survey the wondrous cross* (Hymn 474), one of the enduring masterpieces of English hymnody. First published in 1707, Watts’s text does more than contemplate the Crucifixion: it asks what the Cross requires of us. Its final words—“love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all”—make an especially powerful response to Jesus’ command to lose our lives in order to find them. Sung to **ROCKINGHAM**, the hymn brings the morning’s themes together: the love kindled in us by the Spirit becomes the self-giving love revealed on the Cross and lived out in Christian discipleship.

COMMUNION HYMN



1. Will you come and fol - low me if
2. Will you leave your self be - hind if
3. Will you let the blind - ed see if
4. Will you love the “You” you hide if
5. Christ, your sum-mons ech - oes true when



I but call your name? Will you go where you don’t know and
 I but call your name? Will you care for cruel and kind and
 I but call your name? Will you set the pris - ’ner free and
 I but call your name? Will you quell the fear in - side and
 you but call my name. Let me turn and fol - low you and



nev - er be the same? Will you let my love be shown? Will you
 nev - er be the same? Will you risk the hos - tile stare should your
 nev - er be the same? Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do
 nev - er be the same? Will you use the faith you’ve found to re -
 nev - er be the same. In your com - pa - ny I’ll go where your



let my Name be known? Will you let my life be grown in
 life at - tract or scare? Will you let me an - swer prayer in
 such as this un - seen? And ad - mit to what I mean in
 shape the world a - round through my sight and touch and sound in
 love and foot - steps show, thus I’ll move and live and grow in



1. 2. 3. 4.
 you and you in me?
 you and you in me?
 you and you in me?
 you and you in me?
 5. you and you in me.