



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 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 6, 2026 • 10:00 A.M.

Prelude and Welcome

All stand and join in singing Hymn 376

1 Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
hearts unfold like flowers before thee,
praising thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
drive the dark of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

2 All thy works with joy surround thee,
earth and heaven reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.
field and forest, vale and mountain,
blooming meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
call us to rejoice in thee.

3 Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean-depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our Brother:
all who live in love are thine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

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.**

Ode to Joy

*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 us, O Lord, to trust in you
with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the
proud who confide in their own strength, so you
never forsake those who make their boast of your
mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one
God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

All sit for **A Reading from the Prophet Ezekiel**

You, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, "O wicked ones, you shall surely die," and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: "Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?" Say to them, As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?
Ezekiel 33:7-11

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

A Portion of Psalm 119 *sung by the choir*

- 33 Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, *
and I shall keep it to the end.
34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law; *
I shall keep it with all my heart.
35 Make me go in the path of your commandments, *
for that is my desire.
36 Incline my heart to your decrees *
and not to unjust gain.
37 Turn my eyes from watching what is worthless; *
give me life in your ways.
38 Fulfill your promise to your servant, *
which you make to those who fear you.
39 Turn away the reproach which I dread, *
because your judgments are good.
40 Behold, I long for your commandments; *
in your righteousness preserve my life.

All stand and sing **Hymn 574**

St. Petersburg

- 1 Before thy throne, O God, we kneel:
give us a conscience quick to feel,
a ready mind to understand
the meaning of thy loving hand;
whate'er the pain and shame may be,
bring us, O Father, nearer thee.
- 2 Search out our hearts and make us true;
help us to give to all their due.
From love of pleasure, lust of gold,
from sins which make the heart grow cold,
wean us and train us Lord, we pray,
daily to seek a better way.

- 3 For sins of heedless word and deed,
for pride ambitious to succeed,
for crafty trade and subtle snare
to catch the simple unaware,
for lives bereft of purpose high,
forgive, forgive, O Lord, we cry.
- 4 Let the fierce fires which burn and try,
our inmost spirits purify:
consume the ill; purge out the shame;
O God, be with us in the flame;
a newborn people may we rise,
more pure, more true, more nobly wise.

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

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

Jesus said, "If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."
Matthew 18:15-20

Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Sermon

The Rev'd Ledlie I. Laughlin

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, have mercy.

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.

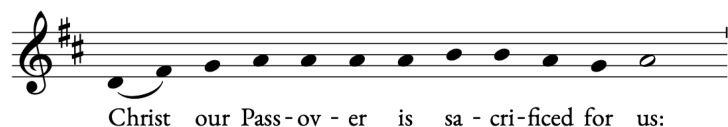
People Therefore let us keep the feast: Alleluia.

Fraction Anthem

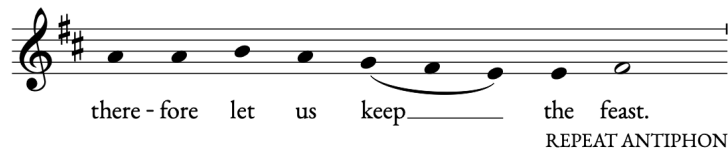
ANTIPHON



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



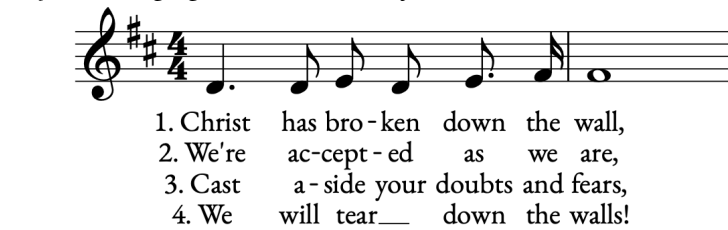
Christ our Pass - ov - er is sa - cri - ficed for us:



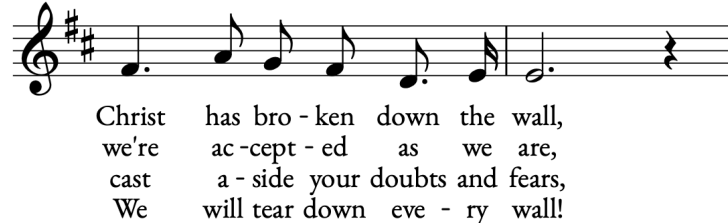
there - fore let us keep the feast.
 REPEAT ANTIPHON

Celebrant The Gifts of God for the people of God.

All join in singing Communion Hymn



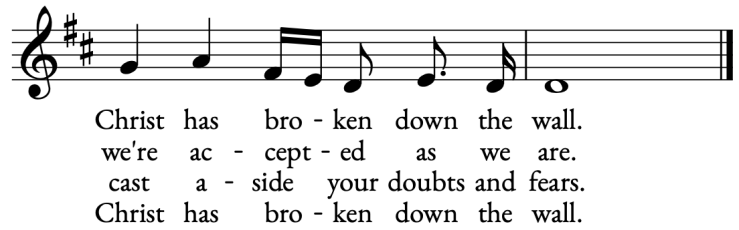
1. Christ has bro - ken down the wall,
 2. We're ac - cept - ed as we are,
 3. Cast a - side your doubts and fears,
 4. We will tear down the walls!



Christ has bro - ken down the wall,
 we're ac - cept - ed as we are,
 cast a - side your doubts and fears,
 We will tear down eve - ry wall!



let us join our hearts as one,
 through God's love all is re - con - ciled,
 peace and love, free - ly of - fered here,
 God has called us, one as all,



Christ has bro - ken down the wall.
 we're ac - cept - ed as we are.
 cast a - side your doubts and fears.
 Christ has bro - ken down the wall.

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 541

Ora labora

- 1 Come, labor on.
 Who dares stand idle on the harvest plain,
 while all around us waves the golden grain?
 And to each servant does the Master say,
 "Go work today."
- 2 Come, labor on.
 The enemy is watching night and day,
 to sow the tares, to snatch the seed away;
 while we in sleep our duty have forgot,
 he slumbered not.
- 3 Come, labor on.
 Away with gloomy doubts and faithless fear!
 No arm so weak but may do service here:
 by feeblest agents may our God fulfill
 his righteous will.
- 4 Come, labor on.
 Claim the high calling angels cannot share--
 to young and old the Gospel gladness bear;
 redeem the time; its hours too swiftly fly.
 The night draws nigh.

- 5 Come, labor on.
No time for rest, till glows the western sky,
till the long shadows o'er our pathway lie,
and a glad sound comes with the setting sun.
"Servants, well done."

Dismissal

Response Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Postlude

Music Notes

Today's music moves from joyful praise through repentance and reconciliation into active service. We begin with **Joyful, joyful, we adore thee**, Henry van Dyke's text joined to Beethoven's famous melody from the Ninth Symphony. Its final stanza—God is "giving and forgiving," and teaches us to love one another—anticipates both Ezekiel's assurance that God desires life rather than death and Jesus' instructions for restoring a broken relationship.

Before the Gospel we sing *Before thy throne, O God, we kneel*. William Boyd Carpenter's prayer for "a conscience quick to feel" echoes Ezekiel's charge to the sentinel and the psalmist's plea for understanding. Dimitri Bortniansky's noble ST. PETERSBURG carries the prayer from self-examination toward renewal.

At Communion, Mark A. Miller's **Christ has broken down the wall** turns Matthew's difficult teaching about conflict toward its purpose: reconciliation and restored communion.

The service concludes with Jane Laurie Borthwick's **Come, labor on**, sung to T. Tertius Noble's ORA LABORA. Its urgent call leaves no room for passive discipleship: having heard God's word and received Christ's peace, the Church is sent out to undertake the work entrusted to it.



**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!

