



# 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter

April 18, 2021

*Christ Revealed - The Journey Continues*

## Stephen's Witness

*Words can be more powerful than weapons.  
Stephen's words cost his life but continue to have lasting effects today.*

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*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God*

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Prelude

"Hallelujah! What a Savior"

- arr. Sanborn

Announcements

Call to Worship

Holy Risen One,  
we gather this day and we come as we are:  
witnesses to your promises, proclaiming God's love.  
Accept all we bring forward to you today.  
Accept our worship, we pray.

Opening Song

**We Bow Down**

**You are Lord of creation  
And Lord of my life  
Lord of the land and the sea  
You were Lord of the heavens  
Before there was time  
And Lord of all lords You will be**

*Chorus*

**We bow down, and we worship You Lord  
We bow down, and we worship You Lord  
We bow down, and we worship You Lord  
Lord of all lords You will be**

**You are King of creation  
And King of my life  
King of the land and the sea  
You were King of the heavens  
Before there was time  
And King of all kings You will be**

*Chorus*

## Confession and Forgiveness

We confess our sins before God and one another.

*Pause for silence and reflection.*

Risen Lord,

**We admit that we are slow to believe, and even slower to follow where you lead us. We doubt your promise, divide your people, and fail to proclaim the power of your resurrection. We choose to live small lives when you have given us the biggest gift of all: your eternal life. Forgive us. Raise us up to a place where we can serve you faithfully.**

Christ is arisen, bringing gifts of life, mercy and pardon for sin! Believe that you are forgiven, and go out and live in the joy of your Lord's resurrection in the power of God's Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## Prayer of Day

God of might, Your messengers' words were not always well received, but they were full of your truth. Give us courage to speak out in the face of injustice and opposition, confident that you will strengthen us by the power of your Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

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## *God speaks to us in scripture, preaching & song*

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*Stephen was called to serve the widows and to proclaim the radical words of justice and peace to a weary and unjust world. It cost him his life, but the effects of his words still have positive effects on people today.*

## Invitation to the Word

**Lord, I lift your name on high; Lord, I lift to sing your praises.  
I'm so glad you're in my life, I'm so glad you came to save us.  
You came from heaven to earth to show the way,  
from the earth to the cross, my debt to pay,  
from the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky;  
Lord, I lift your name on high.**

## Scripture Reading

Acts 6:1—7:2a, 44-60

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. <sup>2</sup>And 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. <sup>3</sup>Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, <sup>4</sup>while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." <sup>5</sup>What 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. <sup>6</sup>They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. <sup>7</sup>The 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.

<sup>8</sup>Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. <sup>9</sup>Then 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. <sup>10</sup>But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. <sup>11</sup>Then they secretly instigated some men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." <sup>12</sup>They 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. <sup>13</sup>They set up false witnesses who said, "This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; <sup>14</sup>for 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.” <sup>15</sup>And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Then the high priest asked him, “Are these things so?” <sup>2</sup>And 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.”

<sup>44</sup>“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. <sup>45</sup>Our 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, <sup>46</sup>who found favor with God and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. <sup>47</sup>But it was Solomon who built a house for him. <sup>48</sup>Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands; as the prophet says, <sup>49</sup>‘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? <sup>50</sup>Did not my hand make all these things?’

<sup>51</sup>“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. <sup>52</sup>Which 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. <sup>53</sup>You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.”

<sup>54</sup>When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. <sup>55</sup>But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup>“Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” <sup>57</sup>But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. <sup>58</sup>Then 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. <sup>59</sup>While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” <sup>60</sup>Then 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.**

## Message

## Special Music

*“Ade Verum Corpus”*

# 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 the People

Hear our prayer, hear our prayer, Lord make us whole,  
peace to all people, hope for each soul.  
God of grace, in this place, hear now our prayer.

We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

Stephen spoke your truth with conviction, and the people rejected him. May we find the strength that transcends our desire not to lose popularity, approval, or our own security for the sake of your gospel's justice.

*Prayer petitions response*

God of wisdom, **hear our prayer.**

*Other petitions offered.*

Incline your ear to our prayers and fill us with power to begin living out our faith, by the power of your Son our savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

# Lord's Prayer

**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.**

# Sharing God's Peace

May the peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

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*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

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## Blessing

May the message of the women who found the tomb empty, bless you with the death transforming love of our living Savior, Jesus Christ. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## Song

***For All Your Saints, O Lord***

Red ELW 427 vv.1,4,5

**For all your saints, O Lord, who strove in you to live,  
who followed you, obeyed, adored,  
our grateful hymn receive.**

**For all your saints, O Lord, who strove in you to die,  
who counted you their great reward,  
accept our thankful cry.**

**For this, your name we bless and humbly pray anew  
that we like them in holiness  
may live and die in you.**

**To God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, ever blest,  
the One in Three, the Three in One,  
be endless praise addressed.**

## Sending

Be amazed! The tomb is empty! Christ is risen!

Go and share this good news.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia.**

## Postlude

*"Lift High the Cross"*

- arr. Sanborn





## Participants

- Pastors: Courtney Steitz, Michael TeKrony
- Prelude & Postlude: Jordan Ortman
- Assisting Minister: Jackie TeKrony
- Liturgy leaders: Diane & Kevin Klinkerfues, John Reed, Barb Stannard,  
Linda Settgast, Joan Meister-Bridges
- Opening Song: Diane & Kevin Klinkerfues
- Special Music: Denver Virtual Choir
- Closing Song: Chancel Choir – Directed by Dave Gleason  
Susie DiPaolo, Brenda Gleason, Denise Ikenberry,  
Linda TeKrony, Mike Madsen, Ron Skabo, Scott Ikenberry
- Photographs: Ray Johnson, Michael TeKrony, Amy Evancheck,  
Winston Herbert