

**St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
February 8, 2026**



*Jesus calls his followers to let the light of their good works shine before others
Through baptism, we are sent into the world to shine with the light of Christ*

We serve God through caring and compassionate service.

The Service

*The Congregation shall stand

The Prelude

*The Brief Order for Confession & Forgiveness

L: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
C: Amen.

L: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
C: Amen.

L: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

L: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

L: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. Through the Holy Spirit, God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in our hearts through faith.
C: Amen.

***The Gathering Hymn**

"Spread, Oh, Spread, Almighty Word"

Text: Jonathan F Bahnmaier, 1774-1841; tr Lutheran Book of Worship, alt

GOTT SEI DANK

Music: J A Freylinghausen, Geistreiches Gesangbuch, 1704

Text © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, admin Augsburg Fortress

- 1. Spread, oh, spread, almighty Word, spread the reign of God the Lord. Send forth our Creator's call, heaven's gifts extend to all.**
- 2. Tell of our Redeemer's grace, who, to save our human race and to pay rebellion's price, gave himself as sacrifice.**
- 3. Tell of God the Spirit giv'n now to guide us on to heav'n, strong and holy, just and true, working both to will and do.**
- 4. Lord of harvest, great and kind, rouse to action heart and mind; let the gath'ring nations all see your light and heed your call.**

***The Greeting**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

***The Kyrie**

L: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

L: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

L: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

L: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

L: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord

C: Amen.

***The Hymn of Praise**

L. Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.

C: Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Prayer of the Day

Jill M

L: Let us pray,

C: Lord God, with endless mercy you receive the prayers of all who call upon you. By your Spirit show us the things we ought to do and give us the grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The assembly shall be seated.

The Children's Meditation

The First Reading

Isaiah 58:1-9[10-12](NRSVue)

Shout out; do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments;
they want God on their side.

³ “Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day
and oppress all your workers.

⁴ You fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?

⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you;
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, “Here I am.”
[If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹ The Lord will guide you continually
and satisfy your needs in parched places
and make your bones strong,
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water
whose waters never fail.

¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.]

The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 112:1-9[10]

intoned responsively



¹ Hallelujah! Happy are they who | fear the Lord*
and have great delight in | God's commandments!

² **Their descendants will be mighty | in the land;***
the generation of the upright | will be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches will be | in their house,*
and their righteousness will | last forever.

⁴ **Light shines in the darkness | for the upright;***
the righteous are merciful and full | of compassion.

⁵ It is good for them to be gener- | ous in lending*
and to manage their af- | fairs with justice.

⁶ **For they will nev- | er be shaken;***
the righteous will be kept in everlast- | ing
remembrance.

⁷ They will not be afraid of any | evil rumors;*
their heart is steadfast, trusting | in the Lord.

**⁸ Their heart is established and | will not shrink,*
until they see their desire up- | on their enemies.**

⁹ They have given freely to the poor, and their righteousness
stands | fast forever;*
they will hold up their | head with honor.

**[¹⁰] The wicked will see it and be angry; they will gnash
their teeth and | pine away;*
The desires of the wick- | ed will perish.**

The Second Reading 1 Corinthians 2:1-12[13-16](NRSVue)

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the testimony of God to you with superior speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴ My speech and my proclamation were made not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

⁶ Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are being destroyed. ⁷ But we speak God's wisdom, a hidden mystery, which God decreed before the ages for our glory ⁸ and which none of the rulers of this age understood, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the human heart conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

¹⁰ God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For what human knows what

is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God.¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. [¹³ And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

¹⁴ Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.

¹⁶ "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"
But we have the mind of Christ.]

The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

The assembly shall stand.

***The Gospel Acclamation**

C: Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

***The Holy Gospel**

Matthew 11:2-11(NRSVue)

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹ "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

The Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly shall be seated.

The Sermon

Jerry Land

The Hymn of the Day "There Is a Balm in Gilead"

*Text: African American spiritual
Music: African American spiritual*

BALM IN GILEAD

Refrain: There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole; there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

1. Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work's in vain, but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.

Refrain:

2. If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul, you can tell the love of Jesus and say, "He died for all."

Refrain:

3. Don't ever be discouraged, for Jesus is your friend; and if you lack for knowledge, he'll ne'er refuse to lend.

Refrain:

The assembly shall stand.

***The Apostle's 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 into hell,
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**

Jill M

L: As God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

A brief silence.

Our church does ministry in many and various ways. Keep the baptized true to the mind of Christ, that our works and witness bring hope to a troubled world. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Your marvelous creation cries out to you. Restore polluted air, soil, and water sources to wholeness. Guard honeybees, elephants,

great whales and songbirds from harm and renew the face of the earth. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Your people in every nation suffer injustice, poverty, and the threat of violence. Guide those in authority to govern with compassion and bring peace to war zones. We pray for our enemies. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Your blessings are poured out for all in need. Help and heal any who experience trauma, discrimination, disease, hunger, abuse or persecution. Comfort those who are sick or grieving especially members of our Congregation who are suffering silently, Cullom family, Scott's great aunt, Raynaud's family, Dave, Dora Beth, Luann, Charlotte, Bob, Chuck, Deb, Joyce, Cathy H, Frank, Leroy, Wendy, Yvonne, Donna, Peggy H, Stephanie, Anita, Michelle, Ann, Genie, Wally, Troy, Anne, Cathy, Chyrstal, and Vivian. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Your wisdom guides this congregation and its ministries. Sustain our leaders, staff, lay leaders, and volunteers. Form us to be salt and light for the neighbors we serve, following the example of Christ. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Great Provider, help your people in need. We pray for families struggling to provide basic needs, especially those who utilize our food pantry. Give us the ability to serve others. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray, Loving God, for the leaders of the church. Guide the synod staff as they select possible candidates for our call process. Give us patience as we await a pastor. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Your saints rejoice at your heavenly banquet. We give thanks for their lives of faith, trusting that we also will be embraced by your eternal love. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God's loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

***The Peace of the Lord**

L: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

*The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.
The assembly shall be seated.*

The Offering

The assembly shall stand.

***The Offertory**

C: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with your free Spirit.

***The Offertory Prayer**

L: Let us pray,

God of majesty, no eye has seen, no ear has heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **C: Amen.**

***The Lord's Prayer**

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, forever and ever.

Amen.

***The Sending Hymn "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies"**

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Music: J G Werner, Choralbuch, 1815

RATISBON

- 1. Christ, whose glory fills the skies, Christ, the true and only light, Sun of righteousness, arise, triumph o'er the shades of night; Dayspring from on high, be near; Daystar, in my heart appear.**
- 2. Dark and cheerless is the morn unaccompanied by thee; joyless is the day's return, till thy mercy's beams I see, till they inward light impart, glad my eyes, and warm my heart.**
- 3. Visit then this soul of mine, pierce the gloom of sin and grief; fill me, radiancy divine, scatter all my unbelief; more and more thyself display, shining to the perfect day.**

The candles are extinguished.

The assembly shall be seated

The Announcements

The Assembly shall stand.

***The Benediction and Blessing**

L: May the triune God,
 who has put a new song in your mouth
 and tuned your heart for praise
 + bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

L: Go in peace. Do justice, love mercy, serve others with care and compassion.

C: Thanks be to God.

The Postlude

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February 8, 2026

Welcome to St. Stephen's! We are glad you have joined us for worship. **In case of emergency ministerial care, please contact Tom Stempson, Phone #317-374-8708, email: stempson@att.net.** We have been blessed to worship alongside you and hope to see you again soon!

This morning we welcome Dena Travelsted presiding and Jerry Land giving the message for today. Thank you for your time and talents.

Please have all announcements for the bulletin to Peg Graham by 5:00 pm on Thursday before worship on Sunday. Thank you. Email - peglgra@att.net; cell phone - 317-796-0424.

Prayer Requests...

Charlotte S – called to the Church Triumphant Wed. evening, Feb. 4.

Joyce & Jay D – Cullom family.

Dave M – recovery from surgery last Tuesday.

Dora Beth R – surgery, Feb 4, breast cancer.

Luann A – recovery after surgery.

Kay W – stepdaughter Joyce, recovery & rehab after surgery.

Tori A – Aunt Sharon; recovery; Stephanie, heart; Michelle, infection.

Bob R – health issues.

Jim & Dena T – Brother Chuck, cardiac issues; Leroy, health.

Tom & Shirley – John; Peggy H, brain tumor.

Holly E – Deb, lung cancer recurred; Anita, bone cancer; Anne, kidney transplant.

Member of Sewing Group – Cathy H, entering hospice.

Genie & Wally R – brother Frank, multiple surgeries; Genie, health; Wally, back.

Wendy B – gainful employment.

Pastor Bob & Sally –Yvonne, broken ribs & hip.

Jim B – wife Donna, recovering from a liver transplant.

Raynaud C – family in Haiti.

Dave & Beth – Troy, broken back.

Scott C – great aunt, broken hip.

Patti W – sister Deb diagnosed with PSP.

Phyllis H – daughter Cathy, granddaughter Chrystal.

Izzy L – friend, Vivian, health.

The Sympathy of the Congregation is extended to Dave Spikes and family at the passing of wife, mother, grandmother Charlotte this past Wednesday evening. Charlotte was a long-time member of St. Stephen's until health problems prohibited her from attending. Funeral arrangements will be announced later.

Up-coming Events:

Today	Pre-Lenten Luncheon following Worship
Wed, Feb 11	9:00 am Pins & Needles Sewing 3:30 pm Table Talk Bible Study
Wed, Feb 18	7:30 pm Ash Wednesday Holy Communion Service

Join us following Worship for the Pre-Lenten luncheon. A time for sharing and indulging in good food and fellowship, before we put away those indulgences and prepare for the Journey to the Cross.

Prepare the Way for the Lord Jesus Christ – Join us on Ash Wednesday, February 18, at 7:30 pm, as we prepare our Lenten Journey with Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes.

Food Pantry on Jan. 24 was really cold, but we served 46 boxes of food for 158 people. Thank you for the help that was provided and hoping for warmer weather on Feb. 28.

Jesus said, “Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.” Matthew 19:14 - There are children activity bags in a basket in the Narthex for children, of various ages, to use during church. The children’s bulletin follows the Lectionary for each week and the children can take it home. At the end of the service, please return the bags to the basket.

Volunteers are always needed to make our services a fellowship of community. Please take time to check the sign-up sheet posted on the black bulletin board for opportunities to serve. **Volunteers are needed to help with Fellowship.** If you can supply the food and snacks on a Sunday, please sign up on the list in the Fellowship Hall. Monetary donations are welcome, too. If you have questions, please see Gloria Kocher.

Current giving income received in the month of January was \$8,503.60. Amount needed each month per 2026 budget is \$9,083.00. If you’d like to make your offering online so you don’t have to deal with checks and envelopes, go to ststephensplainfield.org and click on the Online Offering tab. Thank you.



Please fill out the yellow cards and place them in the offering plate. The cards allow us to track attendance and follow up with visitors. For members, your name and date, along with any prayer requests will suffice. For visitors, please provide your contact information so we can send you a follow-up email or text.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY: Next month our pantry is **Saturday, February 28.** Pantry set-up will be **Friday, February 27.** We know it’s a lot to ask, but please consider giving some time to this important mission. Remember us when you shop or during your regular giving. We’ve been so successful with this mission only because of your loyalty. God Bless.

Preparing for Next Week: Monday Romans 11:2-10 Tuesday Psalm 119:105-112 Wednesday Proverbs 6:6-23 Thursday Hebrews 8:1-7 Friday Psalm 2 Saturday 1 Kings 21:20-29 Transfiguration of Our Lord: Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9