

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Welcoming Worshiping Working

The Holy Eucharist for the Feast of Stephen and Patronal Celebration

Preacher

The Right Reverend Lucinda Ashby
Bishop of El Camino Real

September 13, 2020 at 10am
followed by Coffee Hour with the Bishop

<https://zoom.us/j/496602267> Password: 0908

Or use your landline or cell phone to call one of the following numbers:

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Celebrating St Stephen's Day in September

You have likely heard of The Feast of Stephen. It is forever immortalized in the Christmas Carol “Good King Wenceslas”. If that was during the winter, why are we celebrating The Feast of Stephen in September? St Stephen's Day is December 26, the day that the Church commemorates the first Christian martyr. The Second Day of Christmas is a challenging time for us to have a celebration of our patron saint because we will have just focused our worship and energy on the celebration of The Incarnation.

Deciding when to commemorate St Stephen was and wasn't straightforward. The faithful Episcopalians in old San Luis Obispo, many of whom were city founders, requested that a formal congregation be established. They received canonical (legal) consent from The Right Reverend William Ingraham Kip, First Bishop of California, on September 4, 1867. So, why not celebrate then? Bishop Kip and the SLO Episcopalians were not enjoying the Labor Day Holiday back in 1867!! Since 1894, the first weekend in September has been Labor Day Weekend. To avoid that, we decided on the second weekend in September as our local celebration of the Feast of Stephen. The Right Reverend Mary Gray-Reeves, Third Bishop of El Camino Real, gave her consent in 2019.

Our Mission

Today, we are guided by our Mission: to open our hearts to God and to share Christ's unconditional love with the world. We do this by following three pathways:

- **Welcoming:** We invite all to join us at every stage in their spiritual journeys.
- **Worshipping:** We cultivate a living tradition of liturgy and a life made holy by the sacraments.
- **Working:** We share our abundance, we strive for justice, and we accept our calling to protect God's creation.

We aspire to become more welcoming to people who are not like ourselves, more inclusive in our style of worship, and more cognizant of the earth's holiness. We embrace the Anglican concept of truth as a “three-legged stool” resting on scripture, tradition, and reason. We are comfortable with doubt and patient with the process of discernment, which we understand to be God's ongoing process of revealing the purpose in our own lives. We are keenly aware that when we come together, we are practicing a way of being that may be at odds with the rest of our experience. To open our hearts to God and to share Christ's love with the world, as our mission states, are forms of conversion – of giving in and moving away – that require constant practice and renewal. We may have found a spiritual home – both in San Luis Obispo and at St. Stephen's – but we are still seeking a closer union with God, with our brothers and sisters in humanity, and with the rest of God's creation.

Prelude: St. Stephen at Peace, Malcom Williamson

Clare Olson, Organist

Opening Hymn: 243: When Stephen, full of power and grace

1 When Ste-phen, full of power and grace, went forth through-out the
 2 When Ste-phen preached a - gainst the laws and by those laws was
 3 When Ste-phen, young and doomed to die, fell crushed be - neath the
 4 Let me, O Lord, thy cause de - fend, a knight with - out a

land, he bore no shield be - fore his face, no
 tried, he had no friend to plead his cause, no
 stones, he had no curse nor venge - ful cry for
 sword; no shield I ask, no faith - ful friend, no

wea - pon in his hand; but on - ly in his
 spokes - man at his side; but on - ly in his
 those who broke his bones; but on - ly in his
 venge - ance, no re - ward; but on - ly in my

heart a flame and on his lips a sword where -
 heart a flame and on his eyes a light where -
 heart a flame and on his lips a prayer that
 heart a flame and in my soul a dream, so

with he smote and o - ver - came the foe-men of the Lord.
 with God's day - break to pro - claim and rend the veils of night.
 God, in sweet for - give-ness' name, should un - der-stand and spare.
 that the stones of earth - ly shame a jew - eled crown may seem.

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 Music: *Sabvaton*, melody from *Kentucky Harmony*, 1816, harm. *Songs for Liturgy and More Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, 1971

The Collect of the Day

We give You thanks, O Lord of glory, for the example of the first martyr Stephen, who looked up to heaven and prayed for his persecutors to Your Son Jesus Christ, who stands at Your right hand; where He lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting.

Amen.

The Old Testament Lesson: Jeremiah 26:1-9,12-15

At the beginning of the reign of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, this word came from the Lord: Thus says the Lord: Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the Lord; speak to them all the words that I command you; do not hold back a word. It may be that they will listen, all of them, and will turn from their evil way, that I may change my mind about the disaster that I intend to bring on them because of their evil doings. You shall say to them: Thus says the Lord: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law that I have set before you, and to heed the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently~ though you have not heeded~ then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth. The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord. And when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, "You shall die! Why have you prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, 'This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant?'" And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the Lord. Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and all the people, saying, "It is the Lord who sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words you have heard. Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God, and the Lord will change his mind about the disaster that he has pronounced against you. But as for me, here I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will be bringing innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the Lord sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears."

Psalm 31:1-5



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- 1 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; * deliver me in your righteousness.
 - 2 Incline your ear to me; * make haste to deliver me.
 - 3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold; * for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.
 - 4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, * for you are my tower of strength.
 - 5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, * for you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.
- Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; *
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

The New Testament Lesson: Acts 6:8-7a,51c-60

Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. 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. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated some men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." 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. They set up false witnesses who said, "This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; 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." 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?" And Stephen replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me. You are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. 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. You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it." When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. 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. "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. 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. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 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.

Sequence Hymn: 238: Blessed feasts of blessed martyrs, verses 1-2, 3

1 Bless - ed feasts of bless - ed mar - tyrs, ho - ly wo - men,
 2 Faith pre - vail - ing, hope un - fail - ing, lov - ing Christ with
 3 There-fore, ye that reign in glo - ry, fel - low - heirs with

ho - ly men, with af - fec - tion's re - col - lec - tions
 sin - gle heart, thus they, glo - rious and vic - to - rious,
 Christ on high, join to ours your sup - pli - ca - tion

greet we your re - turn a - gain. Wor - thy deeds they
 brave - ly bore the mar - tyr's part, by con - tempt of
 when be - fore him we draw nigh, pray - ing that, this

wrought, and won - ders, wor - thy of the Name they bore; we, with
 ev - ery an - guish, by un - yield - ing bat - tle done; vic - tors
 life com - plet - ed, all its fleet - ing mo - ments past, by his

meet - est praise and sweet - est, hon - or them for ev - er - more.
 at the last, they tri - umph, with the host of an - gels one.
 grace we may be wor - thy of e - ter - nal bliss at last.

Words: Latin, 12th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale (1818-1866), alt. Music: *Holy Manna*, melody from *The Southern Harmony*, 1835; acc. Margaret W. Mealy (b. 1922) Copyright ©1984, Margaret W. Mealy. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

The Gospel: Matthew 23:34-39

Jesus said, “Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you, desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

The Offertory Anthem: *Kyrie*” from “*Misa de Los Angeles,*” Fr. Sancho, Arr., C Russell

St. Stephen's Chancel Choir, George Gorrindo, Roseann Parks, Soloists

Communion Anthem: “Sanctus” and “Agnus Dei” from “*Misa de Los Angeles,*” Fr. Sancho, Arr., C. Russell

St. Stephen's Chancel Choir

Closing Hymn: 241: Hearken to the anthem glorious

Descant

4 Take from him what ye will give him, of his
 1 Hear - en to the an - them glo - rious of the
 2 Liv - ing, they pro - claimed sal - va - tion, heaven - en -
 3 Christ, for cru - el trai - tors plead - ing, tri - umphed
 4 Take from him what ye will give him, of his
 full - ness grace for grace; strive to think him,
 mar - tyrs robed in white; they, like Christ, in
 dowed with grace and power; and they died in
 in his part - ing breath o'er all mir - a -
 full - ness grace for grace; strive to think him,
 speak him, live him, till you find him face to face.
 death vic - tor - ious dwell for ev - er in the light.
 im - i - ta - tion of their Sa - vior's fi - nal hour.
 cles pre - ced - ing his in - es - ti - ma - ble death.
 speak him, live him, till you find him face to face.

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Postlude: Organ Sonata No. 2, *Allegro*, Felix Mendelssohn

Clare Olson, Organist

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