



FOURTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST

June 28, 2020

***St. Stephen's is a Christian community in the making.***

At the intersection of what was and what will be, we invite you to gather with us around prayer, food, and the simple conviction that nothing is wasted in God's economy.

***All are welcome at St. Stephen's.***

Whether you come with great faith or great doubt,  
regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation or marital status,  
whatever your financial status or housing situation –  
we hope you can find a home with us  
as we explore together what it means to follow Jesus.

**Ministry Team**

<b>Priest &amp; Lead Pastor</b>	The Reverend Jeff Potter jeff@ststephensmaple.ca (416) 569-4263
<b>Honorary Assistant</b>	The Reverend Mary Pataki mary@ststephensmaple.ca
<b>Director of Music</b>	Scott Weidler scott@ststephensmaple.ca
<b>Pastor to Children and Families</b>	Becky Potter becky@ststephensmaple.ca
<b>Pastor of Outreach</b>	Karen Shea karen@ststephensmaple.ca



**ST. STEPHEN'S**

ANGLICAN CHURCH, MAPLE

## Preparation

*Whether you participate in worship in a small group or alone,  
know that you are joined together with the whole St. Stephen's community  
and the wider church as we offer our prayers and praise to God.*

*Consider setting a candle or two out in the space you're using for worship,  
as a reminder of God's presence. Light the candles, and say:*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all.

Almighty God,  
to you all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from you no secrets are hidden.  
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.**

## Seek the Lord

Seek the Lord while he wills to be found;  
call upon him when he draws near.  
Let the wicked forsake their ways  
and the evil ones their thoughts;  
And let them turn to the Lord, and he will have compassion,  
and to our God, for he will richly pardon.  
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor your ways my ways, says the Lord.  
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways,  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.  
For as rain and snow fall from the heavens  
and return not again, but water the earth,  
Bringing forth life and giving growth,  
seed for sowing and bread for eating,  
So is my word that goes forth from my mouth;  
it will not return to me empty;  
But it will accomplish that which I have purposed,  
and prosper in that for which I sent it. *(Isaiah 55.6–11)*

## Collect of the Day

Almighty God,  
you have taught us through your Son  
that love fulfils the law.  
May we love you with all our heart,  
all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength,  
and may we love our neighbour as ourselves;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

## First Reading: Genesis 22:1-14

God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." The angel said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

## Psalm 13

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

**How long shall I have perplexity in my mind, and grief in my heart, day after day?**

**How long shall my enemy triumph over me?**

Look upon me and answer me, O LORD my God;

give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death;

**lest my enemy say, "I have defeated you,"**

**and my foes rejoice that I have fallen.**

But I trust in your unfailing love;

my heart is joyful because of your saving help.

**I will sing to the LORD,**

**who has dealt with me richly.**

## Second Reading: Romans 6:12-23

Do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? <sup>17</sup>But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Gospel: Matthew 10:40-42

Jesus said to the twelve: “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

### Reflection – Jeff+

*The following reflection can be watched online [by clicking here](#)  
or can be read in full below.*

*Please feel free to engage with either or both options,  
and know that whatever you choose  
will enable you to fully participate in the worship of our community.*

Abraham lived in ancient Mesopotamia, in a time and a place that didn’t understand the idea of God. Rather, his culture embraced the idea of local gods that were in charge of things like fertility, weather, and war. The book of Genesis includes the story of Abraham being called by the one, true, living God to leave his father’s house and his homeland, to journey to a new place that he would be shown.

This is huge.

This is Abraham being asked to leave the known for the unknown. The comfortable for the challenging. To be willing to hand in his whole worldview, in exchange for something new. And he isn’t even told where the destination is.

It’s for good reason that Abraham is held up as a model of faith.

But it’s important to remember that the story of Genesis is fundamentally about Abraham learning who this new God is. Because he doesn’t know. And because so much about how this God wants to do things is strange and foreign and completely at odds with what Abraham and people from his culture would have expected.

Like how God enters into covenant with Abraham. Makes promises. And fulfills them. For people in the ancient world, and perhaps still for us today, the idea that the God who made all things would interact with us in this kind of way is mind-blowing.

God promises to make Abraham the father of many nations, and to bless him and his bloodline – so that, through them, the whole world could be blessed too. Even though Abraham and Sarah grow old without a child, God’s promise persists.

Until one glorious day, Sarah conceives. And Sarah and Abraham have Isaac. Their pride and joy, and the fulfillment of God’s promise to them.

And then we come across this strange story, which begins with a note to the reader that God was going to test Abraham.

This idea of testing was common at the time – it fit in with the expected system of sacrifice to appease distant and angry and demanding gods. So the idea of Abraham being tested in this way would not have raised any eyebrows. This was a normal part of a story about a god.

The way that Abraham is to be tested is that God demands he sacrifice his only son. Which to our ears is completely absurd, and raises all kinds of questions about God. What kind of god would do this?

Actually, more than a couple of ancient gods were known to demand this kind of thing. Again, to an ancient audience, this is not a particularly surprising turn of events. They’ve heard this one before.

So, Abraham does what is expected of him. He packs his bags, gathers his servants, and sets off to perform the sacrifice. Something he has seen before.

He and Isaac make the long journey up the mountain, and prepare the altar. Abraham binds Isaac. And then something truly mind-blowing happens.

Abraham is told to stop.

God intervenes, and insists that this kind of sacrifice is not what he really wants. Instead, God will be the one to provide the sacrifice.

In the context of the ancient world, this is utterly unexpected. And it's critical to remember that this story is about Abraham learning what God is like – because this is all new to him, and he doesn't have the benefit of thousands of years of scripture and reflection.

Abraham, and those reading this story, learn that God is not like other Gods. In a time and place where people expect gods to be demanding, fickle, and in need of things that humans can provide, this God is different. This God doesn't demand sacrifice, doesn't require human intervention for his own well-being, doesn't leave his people unsure of where they stand. This God provides.

And so, the test is turned on its head. God reveals himself to be entirely different from what Abraham's worldview would expect, and a deep and profound truth is made clear. God provides. Which, of course, is what Abraham names the place where this all happens.

By now, I'm sure you've heard the news. At the end of August, my time at St. Stephen's will come to an end. This decision has been incredibly difficult for me and my family. St. Stephen's is more important to us than I could ever express, and it is challenging and gut-wrenching to imagine stepping away. But, for a whole wide range of reasons, I believe that it is what I am called to do.

And I don't believe that it is the end of the story for any of us.

We're all a bit like Abraham – called to journey onward, trusting in God even without knowing quite what destination he has in store for us. And just like Abraham, a fundamental part of the story is about us learning more and more what God is like.

In the midst of all of the uncertainty, in the midst of all of the awful, challenging, painful things that we're going through, my prayer is that we might know that this isn't a test. Or, at least, it's not that kind of test. The challenge here is not for us to be good enough, pure enough, or faithful enough. It's never been about us at all. The challenge here is to remember that this is about God.

And, God provides.

Amen.

## **Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ,  
his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He 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,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again  
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**

*As a community of people made one in Christ, we offer our prayers to God for ourselves,  
our community, and the world. Feel free to adapt these prayers as you like,  
and to make use of the spaces indicated to add your own prayers and petitions.*

Let us pray together to the Lord, saying, "Lord, hear our prayer."

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we thank you for your many gifts to us,  
for the love which brings us together,  
for the earth which provides for our needs,  
for the new life you have given us in Jesus Christ,  
(for . . . ).

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray to you for our Christian family (especially for . . . )  
and for grace to grow in your love.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray to you for our world, for all its cares and needs,  
and for all who lead us and care for us, (especially . . . )

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray to you for those in need, for the sick and the lonely,  
for the hurt and the frightened, and for those who live without hope (especially . . . ).

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for those we love who have died, that you will surround them with your care and love  
(especially . . . )

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for one another, asking you to bless us, our friends, and relatives.  
Bless the places where we work, and bless our home and our life together.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Let us now name before God those for whom we offer our personal prayers.

*A period of silence is kept as we offer silent prayer  
and listen for the leading of the Spirit.*

Let us remember before God our selfish ways, the things we have done wrong,  
the sorrows we have caused, the love we have not shown.

**Most merciful God, forgive us our sins against you and against each other.**

**Strengthen us to overcome our weaknesses,  
that we may live in love as you would have us live,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.**

Lord, you have called us to serve you.

**Grant that we may walk in your presence  
and experience the present truth of resurrection:  
your love in our hearts, your truth in our minds,  
your strength in our wills, until, at the end of our journey,  
we know the joy of our homecoming and the welcome of your embrace,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## Lord's Prayer

And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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, the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

## Blessing

May joy and nothing less find us on our way.

May we be blessed and be a blessing.

And may light guide us, and countless others, all the way home.

**Amen.**

May we go in peace, have courage, hold on to what is good,  
return no one evil for evil, strengthen the faint-hearted,  
support the weak, help the suffering, honor everyone, love and serve God,  
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

**Thanks be to God.**

# MUSIC

Following are several hymns that you may want to sing and/or listen to.  
Music and texts, as well as sample links, are provided.

## For Everyone Born, a Place at the Table

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
For everyone born, clean water and bread,  
A shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,  
For everyone born, a star overhead.

and God \_\_\_\_\_ will de - light when we are cre -  
a - tors of jus - tice\_\_\_ and joy, \_\_\_\_\_ com -  
pas - sion and peace; yes, God\_\_\_ will re - joice when we are cre -  
a - tors of jus - tice, \_\_\_ jus - tice and joy!

For woman and man, a place at the table,  
Revising the roles, deciding the share,  
With wisdom and grace, dividing the power,  
For woman and man, a system that's fair. **Refrain**

For just and unjust, a place at the table,  
A voice to be heard, a part in the song,  
The hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,  
For young and for old, the right to belong. **Refrain**

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
To live without fear, and simply to be,  
To work, to speak out, to witness and worship,  
For everyone born, the right to be free. **Refrain**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYp7xEJ\\_AbU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYp7xEJ_AbU)

## Praise to the Lord



Praise to the Lord, the Al - might - y, the King of cre - a - tion!  
Praise to the Lord - o - ver all things he glo - rious - ly reign - eth:  
Praise - to the Lord, - who doth pros - per thy way and de - fend - thee;  
Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me a - dore him!



O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and sal - va - tion!  
borne as on ea - gle - wings, safe - ly - his saints - he sus - tain - eth.  
sure - ly his - good - ness and - mer - cy shall ev - er - at - tend - thee;  
All that hath life and breath, come now with prais - es be - fore him!



Join the great throng, psal - ter - y, or - gan and song,  
Hast thou not - seen how all thou need - est hath - been  
pon - der a - new what the Al - might - y - can do,  
Let the a - men sound from his peo - ple a - gain.



sound - ing in glad ad - or - a - tion.  
grant - ed in what - he - or - dain - eth.  
who - with his love doth S - friend - thee.  
Glad - ly for - ev - er a - dore him.

<https://www.facebook.com/nelsojl/videos/985446700312/>

For other hymns, check out:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGLVPtOYRgM>



# ST. STEPHEN'S

ANGLICAN CHURCH, MAPLE

10103 Keele Street

Maple, Ontario, L6A 3Y8

416-569-4263

[www.ststephensmaple.ca](http://www.ststephensmaple.ca)