

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen 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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Leader: **Responding by half verse:**

- 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.**
- 15 My times are in your hand;
**rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.**
- 16 Make your face to shine upon your servant,
and in your loving-kindness save me.

Second Reader: A READING FROM 1 PETER

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

“See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner”, and

“A stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people,
but now you are God’s people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Prayers of the People:

Beloved siblings in Christ, peace be with you. Let us pray to our merciful Lord, saying, “Our Lord and our God, **have mercy on us.**”

Lord Jesus Christ, you have given your Church the gift of your Holy Spirit. May that same Spirit comfort and strengthen us as we proclaim your resurrection to the world.

Silence

Our Lord and our God, **have mercy on us.**

God of wisdom, teach and counsel the leaders of the nations. May this world be filled with justice and peace.

Silence

Our Lord and our God, **have mercy on us.**

God our provider, you have given us this earth as a goodly heritage. May we use its resources wisely and always according to your purpose.

The congregation may add their thanksgivings, followed by silence.

Our Lord and our God, **have mercy on us.**

All-knowing God, raise up for this community people who will stand and voice your truth. May we be led by you on good paths of life.

Silence

Our Lord and our God, **have mercy on us.**

Merciful God, you are a strong refuge for those in trouble. Protect all those who suffer various trials. Reveal yourself to those who struggle to believe in you. Make all your people glad by the living hope that is found in you.

The congregation may add their petitions, followed by silence.

Our Lord and our God, **have mercy on us.**

God of life, may the dying and the dead rest in hope. Give us faith that you do not abandon anyone—even to the grave. And preserve us for the great inheritance you give us through the resurrection of your Son from the dead.

Silence

Our Lord and our God, **have mercy on us.**

The Celebrant concludes, adding a Collect.