

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



DECEMBER 1, 2024

10 A.M.

WE WELCOME PR. BETSY GOEHRIG.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
(850) 385-2728, Office
sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com, Email
<http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com>
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor
Katharine Gossman, Music Director
Lori Zengel, Office Manager
All Members, Ministers

Welcome, Everyone!

We are glad to have you with us this morning. If you need assistance in finding anything, one of our ushers will be glad to help you.

Restrooms are found in the fellowship hall and office building to the right as you exit the sanctuary. Proceed up the stairs and through the glass door. Unisex bathrooms are available through the kitchen in the office area. Please do not leave children under 12 unattended.

“Let the Little Children Come” Matthew 19:14 - In accordance with St. Stephen’s mission “to be a welcoming community . . .” we encourage all ages to worship on Sundays. We also believe that children learn to welcome others by how they have been welcomed. If you are a parent of a young child, know that this community supports your efforts to engage your child in worship and understands that it can be a stressful process. Having children in worship is a joy that we treasure, so please know that we welcome you and your children as they learn to become active members in Christ’s body. A nursery is available if parent or guardian desires. See usher for details.

Please remember to turn off your cell phone during the liturgy.

All the hymns for the worship service are in the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship book and numbered by hymn, not page.

For safety we no longer pass the offering plate. Financial gifts can be placed in the plate by the baptismal font.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church (ELCA) is a Reconciling in Christ congregation that explicitly welcomes people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. St. Stephen is equally committed to anti-racism. We welcome people without regard to race, ethnicity, age, family status, economic status, or differing abilities.

All are invited to receive the sacrament. Lutherans believe that Jesus Christ is present in, with and under the consecrated bread and wine of Holy Communion. Those not wishing to commune are welcome to the altar to receive a blessing. To indicate this, please cross your arms over your chest. If you are not able to come forward, please inform the ushers and the meal will be brought to you.

INTRODUCTION

Advent is about the “coming days.” God’s people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a “righteous Branch to spring up for David.” The Thessalonians awaited “the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints.” Jesus’ contemporaries hoped for the time “to stand before the Son of Man.” With them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of Christ in word and supper.

PRELUDE

The assembly stands.



+ GATHERING +

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

C Amen.

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

Silence for reflection.

P God of mercy,

C we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

P God of might,

C we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.

P God in our midst,

C we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.

P A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through ✝ Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

GATHERING HYMN 257 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs. 1-4)*

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
 4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
 and night in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law;
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,

Refrain
 un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joice! Re-joice!
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
 and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.

Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.


Text: Psalterium Cantuarum Cathedralium, Köln, 1710; tr. composite
 Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.
 Text no. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.


GREETING

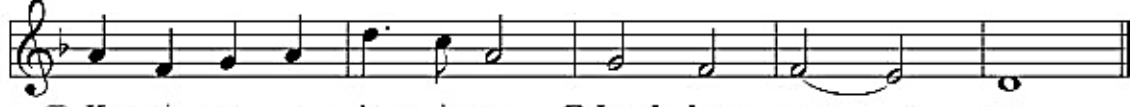
P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

KYRIE


[A] Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: [C] Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:


[A] Chri - ste e - le - i - son: [C] Christ, have mer - cy.
Christ, have mer - cy:


[A] Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: [C] Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:

PRAYER OF THE DAY



P Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

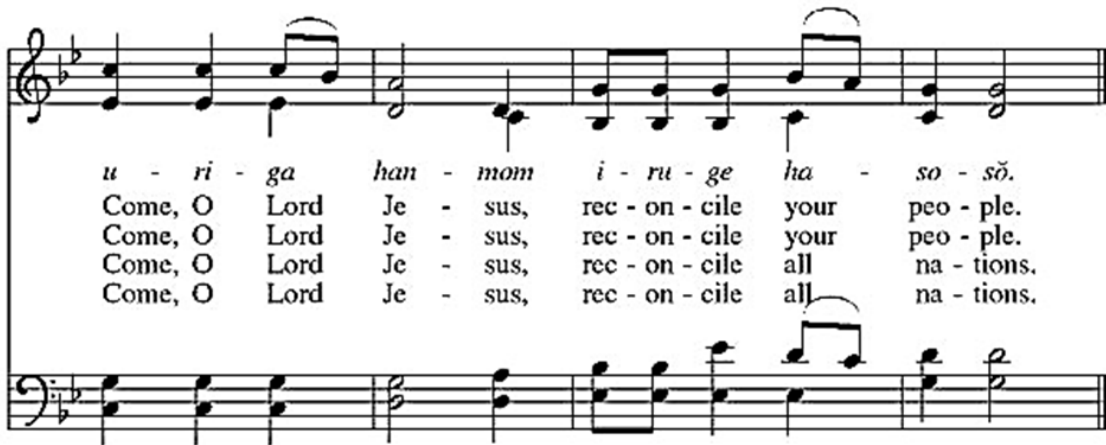
Come Now, O Prince of Peace

Ososǒ, ososǒ



O - so - sǒ o - so - sǒ, pyong - hwa - ŭi - im - gŭm

1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
 2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
 3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
 4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.



u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sǒ.

Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope
 Music: OSOSŎ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947
 Text and music © Geonyong Lee.

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME



+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14-16

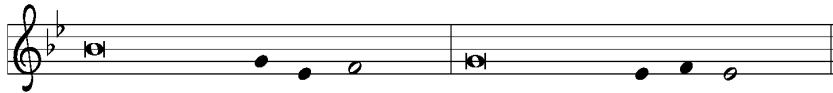
In the Old Testament, “righteousness” often has to do with being faithful in relationship. God acts righteously both in punishing Israel for its sin and in having mercy. In today’s reading, Jerusalem’s future name—“The Lord is our righteousness”—proclaims that God is even now working salvation for Israel.

¹⁴The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.”

Reader The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-10 *We sing the psalm responsively.*



Leader ¹To | you, O Lord,
I lift | up my soul.

**C ²My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be | put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.**

L ³Let none who look to you be | put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame | who are treacherous.

**C ⁴Show me your | ways, O Lord,
and teach | me your paths.**

L ⁵Lead me in your | truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all | the day long.

C ⁶ Remember, O Lord, your compas- ¹ sion and love,
for they are from ¹ everlasting.

L ⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth and ¹ my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your
good- ¹ ness, O Lord.

C ⁸ You are gracious and up- ¹ right, O Lord;
therefore you teach sinners ¹ in your way.

L ⁹ You lead the low- ¹ ly in justice
and teach the low- ¹ ly your way.

C ¹⁰ All your paths, O Lord, are steadfast ¹ love and faithfulness
to those who keep your covenant and your ¹ testimonies.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

Amen.

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Upon Timothy's report from the congregation at Thessalonica, Paul is exuberant with gratitude for them. In this passage from his letter, Paul voices overflowing thanks, joy, and blessings for the people of this growing church.

⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. ¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. ¹³ And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

R The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Luke 21:25-36

God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.

P The holy gospel according to Luke, the twenty-first chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] ²⁵ “There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶ People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

²⁹ Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰ as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴ “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵ like a trap. For it

will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

The assembly is seated.

SERMON *We encounter the living word of God in the preaching.*

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY

245 *Creator of the Stars of Night*



1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo - ple's ev - er -
2 When this old world drew on toward night, you came; but not in
3 At your great name, O Je - sus, now all knees must bend, all
4 Come in your ho - ly might, we pray, re - deem us for e -
5 To God the Fa - ther, God the Son, and God the Spir - it,



last - ing light, O Christ, re - deem - er of us all,
splen - dor bright, not as a mon - arch, but the child
hearts must bow: all things on earth with one ac - cord,
ter - nal day; de - fend us while we dwell be - low
Three in One, praise, hon - or, might, and glo - ry be



we pray you hear us when we call.
of Mar - y, bless - ed moth - er mild.
like those in heav'n, shall call you Lord.
from all as - saults of our dread foe.
from age to age e - ter - nal - ly. A - men.

Text: Latin hymn, 9th cent.; tr. *Hymnal* 1940, alt.
Music: CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM, plainsong mode IV
Text © 1940 Church Pension Fund, admin. Church Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

APOSTLES' CREED

A Let us confess our faith.

C 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 INTERCESSION

Each petition ends: Lord, in your mercy,

Congregational response: receive our prayer.

PEACE

A The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

We greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

The assembly is seated.

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

ANTHEM "Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning"

African American spiritual, arr. Helgen

Keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
Keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
Keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
For this work is almost done.

(Refrain)

Children, don't get weary,
Children, don't get weary,
Children, don't get weary,
for this work is almost done.

Darker midnight lies before us,
Darker midnight lies before us,
Darker midnight lies before us.
For this work is almost done.

Lo, the morning soon is breaking,
Lo, the morning soon is breaking,

Lo, the morning soon as breaking,
For this work is almost done.
(Refrain)

OFFERING HYMN

ELW 182

Let the Vineyards be Fruitful Lord

Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature of 4/4. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes. The score ends with a double bar line.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980

Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923

Text and music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.

C 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.

+ SENDING +

BLESSING *We receive the blessings of the triune God.*

P God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, ✠ bless and keep you now and forever.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

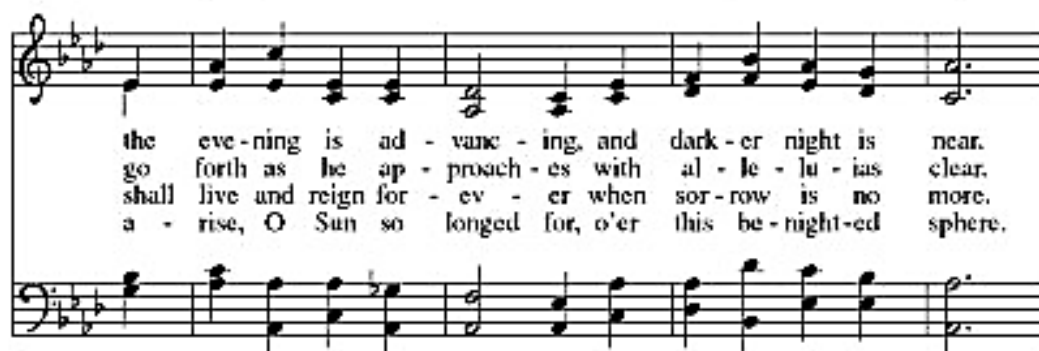
The assembly stands.

SENDING HYMN

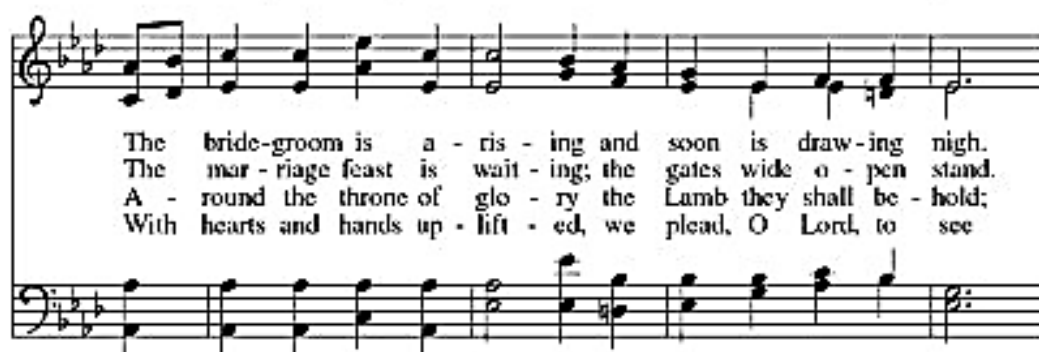
244 *Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers*



1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
 2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
 3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'ings bore,
 4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
 go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear,
 shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.
 a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
 The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
 A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;
 With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
 A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.
 in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
 the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

DISMISSAL

A We believe out loud that God's mission for us is:

C to be an active community that welcomes all people to nurture and share their faith and gifts with everyone, according to God's call.

A Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

C Thanks be to God!

+ + +

Sundays and Seasons v.20220805.1416

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Today's altar flowers are dedicated to the glory of God.

Calendar for December 1 - 8

Dec.	1	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10:00 am	Worship, First Sunday of Advent
	4	Wed.	7:00 pm	Choir practice
	8	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10:00 am	Worship, Second Sunday of Advent

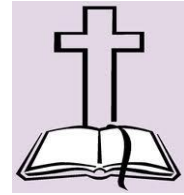
Next Sunday's Readings, Second Sunday of Advent:

[Malachi 3:1-4](#)

[Luke 1:68-79](#)

[Philippians 1:3-11](#)

[Luke 3:1-6](#)



SERVING EVERY SUNDAY

Pastor Tom, presiding and preaching

Katharine Gossman, piano

Karl Barton, flute

Denise Bookwalter, announcements

Choir: Karl Barton, Melissa Barton, Mark Canning, Judi Duffy, Kirsten Ebbesen, Rita Ford, Rudy Hehn, Susan Hehn, Colleen Holdcraft, Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Olivia James, Sandy Ness, Dave Suhrweir, Cassandra White

SERVING TODAY AND ONE WEEK FROM TODAY

Serving	Dec. 1	Dec. 8
Assisting Minister	Kirsten Ebbesen	Rob Schiffer
Cup Minister	Beth Alexander	Rita Ford
Cantor		
Lector	Greta Scavone	Mark Bertolami
Acolyte	Ceilia Greeley or Graham Reece or Bastian Stover	
Tech Team	Caroline Collins Cindy Suhrweir	
Ushers	Jan Harrison Patrick Kennell	Patrick Kennell Lawana Lamb-Daniels
Altar Guild	Beth Alexander	Linda Eshleman Barbara Sullivan
Counters	Margaret Bowers Patricia Handschy	Patricia Handschy Loraine Sundberg

PRAYER REQUESTS

New concerns: Donna Dickson Miller (friend of Audrey Post), facing health challenges; Wayne McCully (friend of Audrey Post), undergoing dialysis for kidney failure; Gladys Kane for continued healing.

For the sick: Sallie Robinson (wife of Erik Robinson); Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White); Laura McDuffie (sister of Rob Schiffer).

In treatment for cancer: Ruth Hartung; Scott Simmons (son of Sharon Simmons); Gordon Fleischer; Stephanie Barber; Jim Saxman (uncle of Rob Schiffer); Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; James Sablan (brother of Donna Schiffer); Craig Timm (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Laura Ketchum-Jahn, (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Aubrey Thonvold (Reconciling Works Exec. Dir.); Gil Johnson (friend of Judi Duffy); Amanda George (daughter-in-law of Rob Schiffer); David McManus (friend of Audrey Post); Shannon Miller (friend of Barb O'Donnell); Becky Graves (friend of Ridy Hofer); Timothy Stewart (son of Pepper Stewart).

Health and protection: For all affected by the coronavirus – especially those experiencing mental-health difficulties due to isolation, those struggling to recover from the disease, those on the front lines fighting, researching and treating the disease (doctors, nurses, medical personnel, EMTs), the millions of unemployed people, etc.; for the unaccompanied children entering the U.S., including those “unaccounted for.”

For prisoners: All those on Death Row.

Other concerns: For Karen Olson; Kevin Robinson (son of Erik Robinson), in need of encouragement; Isaac (son of Terri Schmitt), for physical and emotional healing; Steve Michael (cousin of Rob Schiffer), in rehab after a serious accident.

Church concerns: St. Stephen's Church Council; the Florida-Bahamas Synod Council; all congregations searching for ways to stay connected and proclaim the Good News; Reconciling Works; Grace Lutheran Church; Bishop Pedro Suarez; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Pensacola.

World concerns: For all people suffering and/or recovering from hurricanes; migrants and asylum seekers; civil rights for people around the world; a ceasefire in Ethiopia and in Ukraine; peace in Afghanistan and the Middle East.


ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS: We'll be decorating the chancel area with poinsettias for Christmas. Would you like to dedicate one (or more)? The cost is \$10, and the dedication list will be in the Dec. 15th and 22nd bulletins. Just fill out the form in the narthex and place it with your payment in the offering plate, or email Lori with the information. The deadline is Sunday, Dec. 8.


PLEDGE DRIVE: We are collecting pledge cards for 2025. Please prayerfully consider your planned contributions for the ministry of St. Stephen. The estimate of giving is vital information for our Church Council to begin preparing our budget. Our planned gifts are also vital to our own spiritual development and maturity. Thank you in advance for your generous stewardship and trust in God's mercy. *(Cards are in the narthex and can be dropped in the collection plate. You also have the option of pledging directly to Lori via email or phone.)*


FLOWER CHART FOR 2024: Do you have an anniversary, birthday or special memory you would like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service by signing up for the 2024 Flower Chart located in the narthex. The cost is \$40, and you can place it in the offering plate.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: Want to read a sermon you missed? Visit <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>. Want to read the latest newsletters? Go to <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>. Want to browse a collection of St. Stephen songs? They're at <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>.

**KidSafe**
EVERY CHILD DESERVES A SAFE RIDE

INVITES YOU TO JOIN US ON
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3 FROM 5-8 PM
FOR SHARE NIGHT AT


Welcome to delicious.™


Butter Burgers, Frozen Custard, Cheese Curds
and more.

2439 N. Monroe Street

Culver's will donate 10% of all sales from
5-8 pm during the Share Night to KidSafe
to provide safety seats for children in
low-income families.

www.kidsafebigbend.org