ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



November 8, 2026
10 a.m.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

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 Rita Ford, 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**.**

"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.

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.

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

Today the prophet Amos calls for justice to roll down like waters. Paul urges us to encourage one another with the promised coming of the Lord. Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids. Surrounded by the faithful of every time and place, we celebrate Christ's coming in our midst in the word of life and the feast of victory—the marriage feast of the Lamb.

PRELUDE *"The Swan" - Saint-Saens*
Alison Haney, cello

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, our dwelling place for all generations, whose compassion never slumbers.

C Amen.

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

Silence for reflection.
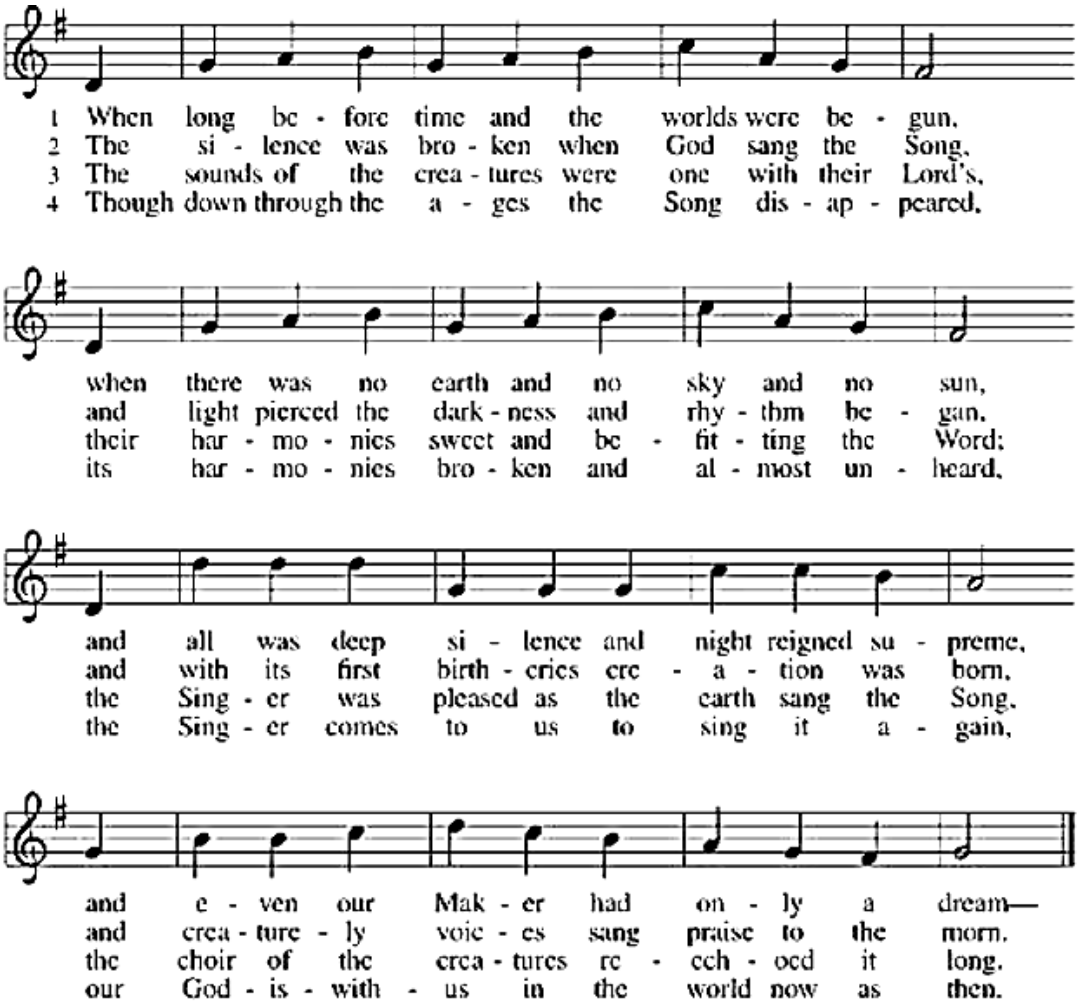
P Holy God,

C we confess that we have trusted in our preparation instead of your invitation. We prioritize our piety over care for your beloved. We trust the voice of our shame and fear, which keeps us from entering fully into relationship with you and others. We are not awake to the coming of your reign. Rouse us and rescue us, that we may enter into your joy. Amen.

P Inherit the riches of God's grace. ☩ Jesus, the good shepherd, feeds you with his mercy. You are forgiven. Blessed are you.

C Amen.

GATHERING HYMN ELW 861 *When Long before Time (vs 1-3,6)*



5 The Light has returned as it came once before,
the Song of the Lord is our own song once more,
so let us all sing with one heart and one voice
the Song of the Singer in whom we rejoice.

6 To you, God the Singer, our voices we raise,
to you, Song Incarnate, we give all our praise,
to you, Holy Spirit, our life and our breath,
be glory forever, through life and through death.
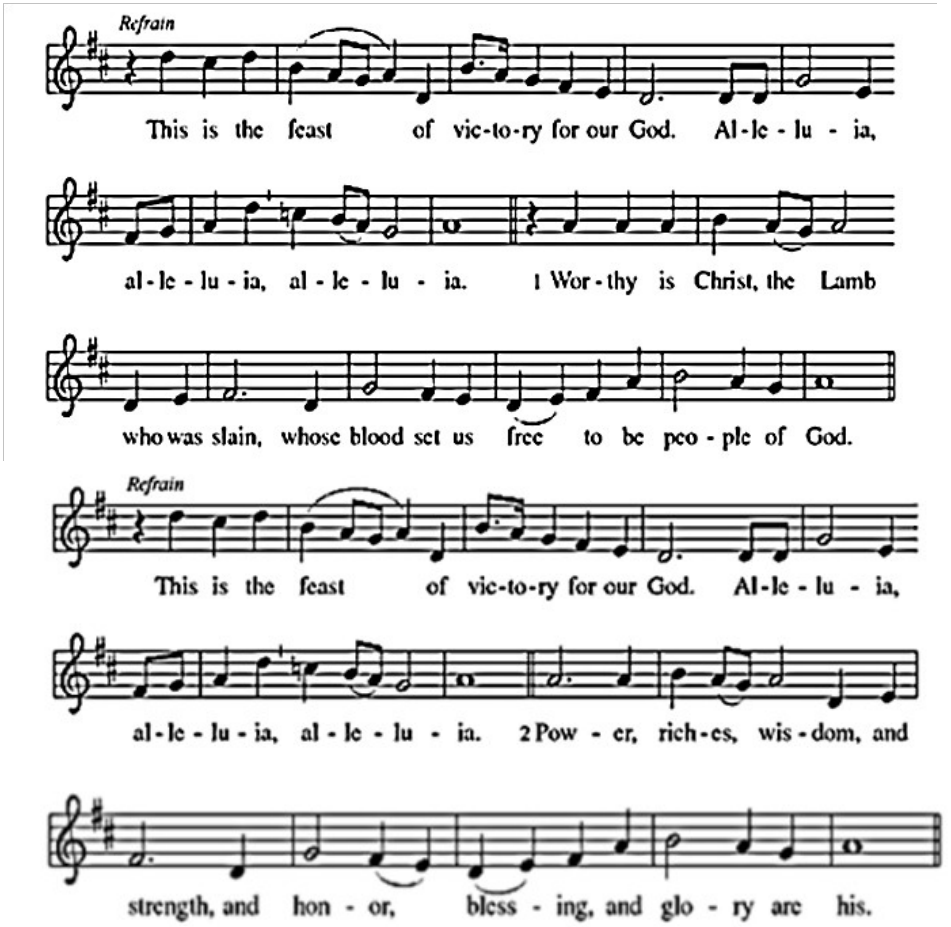
Text: Peter W.A. Davison, b. 1936
Music: The Singer Arthur Sims, Peter W.A. Davison
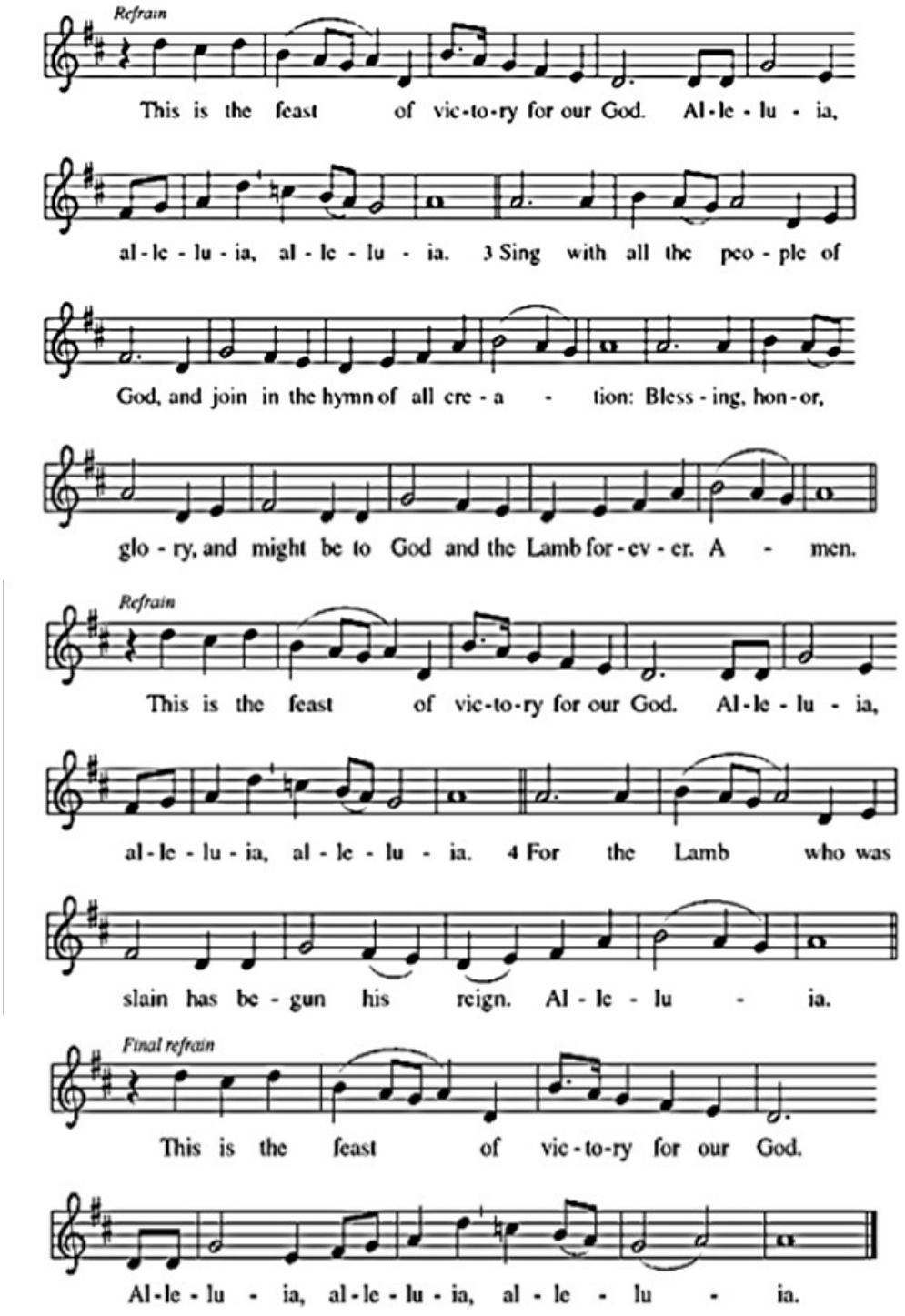
GREETING

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.

HYMN OF PRAISE




Refrain
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. 3 Sing with all the peo-ple of
God, and join in the hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing, hon-or,
glo-ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.
Refrain
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. 4 For the Lamb who was
slain has be-gun his reign. Al-le-lu-ia.
Final refrain
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.
Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY



P Let us pray.

O God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.



CHILDREN'S TIME

+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Amos 5:18-24
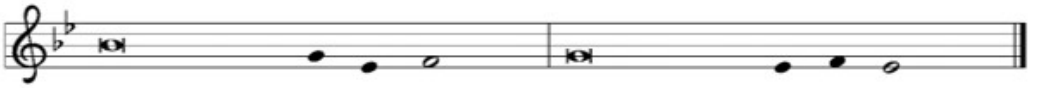
In the days of Amos, people thought that the day of the LORD would be a time of great victory, but Amos announced that it would be a day of darkness, not light. He said liturgy is no substitute for obedience. The LORD demands justice and righteousness in the community.

18 Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! Why do you want the day of the Lord?
It is darkness, not light, 19 as if someone fled from a lion and was met by a bear or went
into the house and rested a hand against the wall and was bitten by a snake. 20 Is not the day
of the Lord darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? 21 I hate, I despise your
festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. 22 Even though you offer me your
burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them, and the offerings of well-being
of your fatted animals I will not look upon. 23 Take away from me the noise of your songs;
I will not listen to the melody of your harps. 24 But let justice roll down like water and
righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 70 *We sing the psalm responsively.*



Leader [1] Be pleased, O God, to de- | liver me;
O Lord, make | haste to help me.

C [2] Let those who seek my life be put to shame | and confounded;
let those who take pleasure in my misfortune draw back and | be disgraced.

L [3] Let those who say to me "Aha!" and gloat | over me
turn back because | of their shame.

C [4] Let all who seek you rejoice and be | glad in you;
let those who love your salvation say forever, "Great | is the Lord!"

L [5] But as for me, I am poor and needy; come to me quick- | ly, O God.
You are my helper and my deliverer; O Lord, | do not tarry.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

Amen.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Some of the Thessalonians are worried that dead Christians will be excluded from the resurrection to eternal life when Christ comes again. Paul reassures them with the word of hope that all Christians, living or dead, will be raised into everlasting life with Christ.

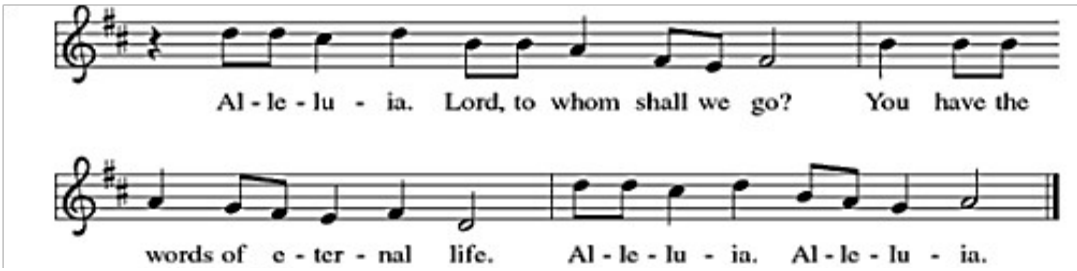
[13] We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. [14] For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. [15] For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. [16] For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will be with the Lord forever. [18] Therefore encourage one another with these words.

R The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus tells a parable about his own second coming, emphasizing the need for readiness at all times.

P The holy gospel according to Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten young
women took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and
five were wise. 3 When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the
wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them
became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the
bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those young women got up and trimmed
their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are
going out.' 9 But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had
better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' 10 And while they went to buy it, the
bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet, and
the door was shut. 11 Later the other young women came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to
us.' 12 But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' 13 Keep awake, therefore, for you
know neither the day nor the hour."

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.
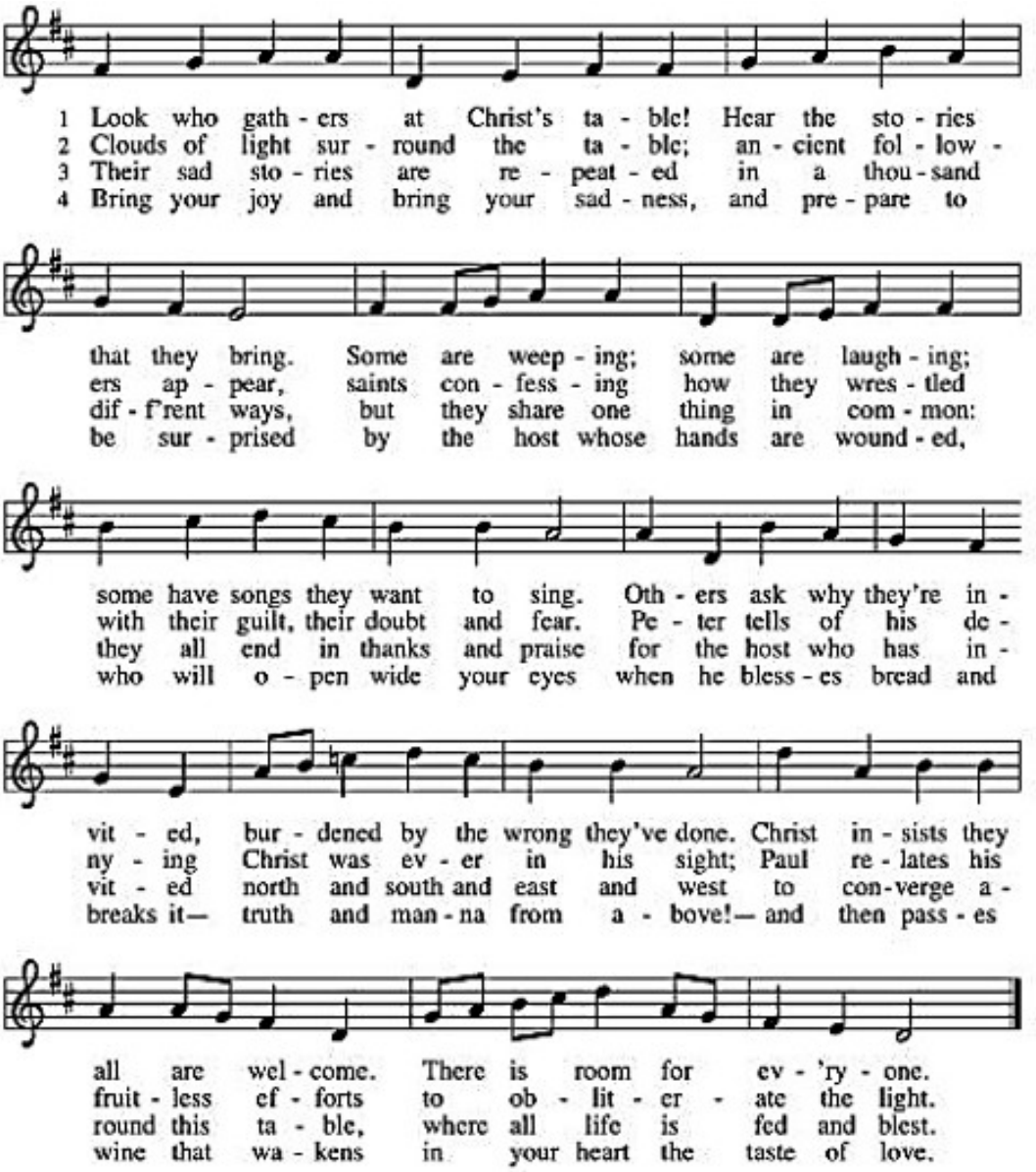
The assembly is seated.

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

Quiet reflection.

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY **ACS 977** *Look Who Gathers at Christ's Table*



Text: Thomas H. Troeger, b. 1945
Music: COPELAND, Michael Corzine, b. 1947
Text © 2003 Oxford University Press. 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

United with the great cloud of witnesses, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

(A brief silence)

You illuminate the church with hope of your new day. Keep us in that expectation and prepare our hearts for your inbreaking. Awaken us to be transformed by your love at work all around us. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You create and sustain the earth's natural rhythms so that all earth might thrive. Help us to balance nature to provide clean water and food. Make us your careful stewards. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You make justice roll down in all places and among all nations. Encourage the newly elected to protect vulnerable communities and help rebuild in the aftermath of conflict. We pray for veterans and those who care for them while giving thanks for their service. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Hasten to heal wounds and make whole what is broken. Comfort those who face difficult diagnosis, receive palliative care, or face uncertain options. St. Stephen, who else would welcome our prayers today?
(Pause for people to speak petitions.)
God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Bless our speakers during the Stewardship Campaign season. As days grow shorter in the north, help us to move more slowly and intentionally through the days while honoring the body's need for darkness and quiet. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

A few at a time, each week, we pray for people within the St. Stephen worship community. We pray today for Mark Mustian and Greta Sliger, Jacob Nallapu and Lisa Stoltz and for their extended families. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You welcome those who have come before us to faith into the joys of heaven. Sustain us by your grace and guide us into your promise of everlasting life. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Into your steadfast love, faithful God, we entrust all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus, your beloved.

AMEN!

The peace of Christ be with you, always!
And also with you!

Let us share the peace of God with one another.



Stephen Saint
@Stephen-Saint

venmo

Use this QR Code to connect to Venmo for a donation to St. Stephen. Code 5469.

+ MEAL +

OFFERING

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

ANTHEM *"Down to the River to Pray" – Allan/Crandal*
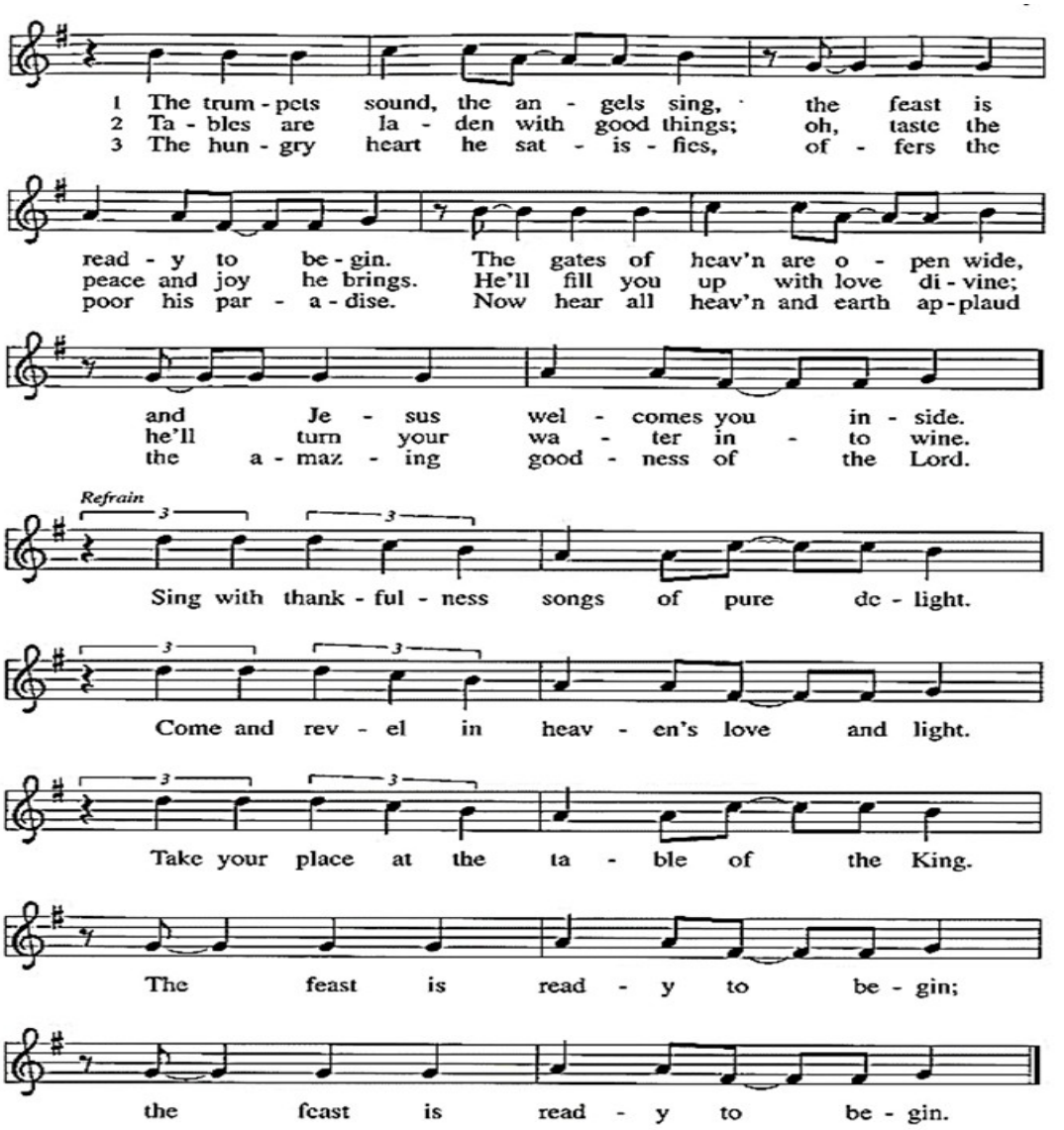
As I went down to the river to pray,
studying about that good old way
and who shall wear the starry crown-
Good Lord, show me the way!

O *sisters, let's go down
Let's go down, come on down.
O *sisters, let's go down,
down to the river to pray.

*brothers
*singers

OFFERING HYMN **531** *The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing (vs. 1)*

The assembly stands to sing the offering hymn as the collection and the gifts are brought forward.



Text: Graham Kendrick, b. 1950
Music: Graham Kendrick
Text and music © 1989 Make Way Music, admin. Music Services in the Western Hemisphere

THE FEAST IS READY
LM and refrain

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.
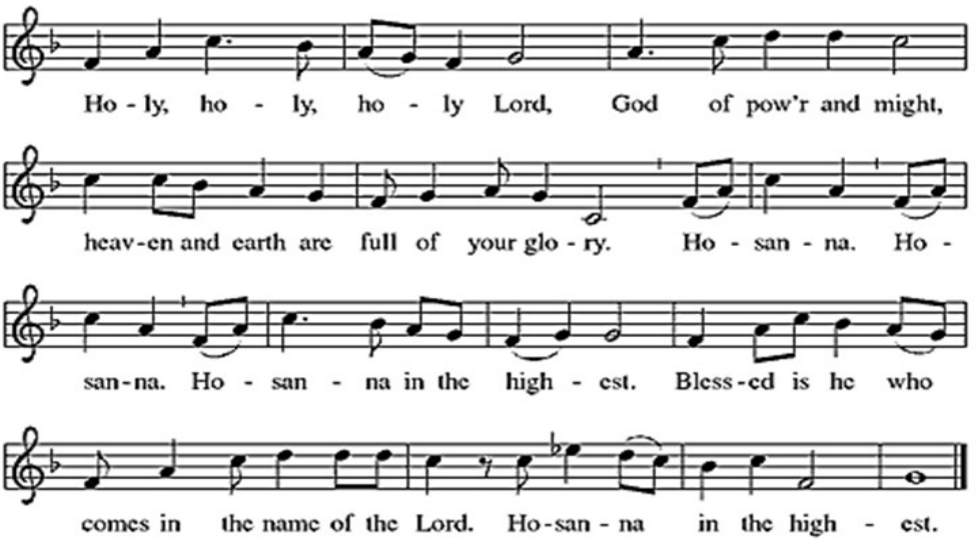
C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



The presiding minister continues to give thanks.

P In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread,
and gave thanks; broke it,
and gave it to his disciples,
saying: Take and eat;
this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

C Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

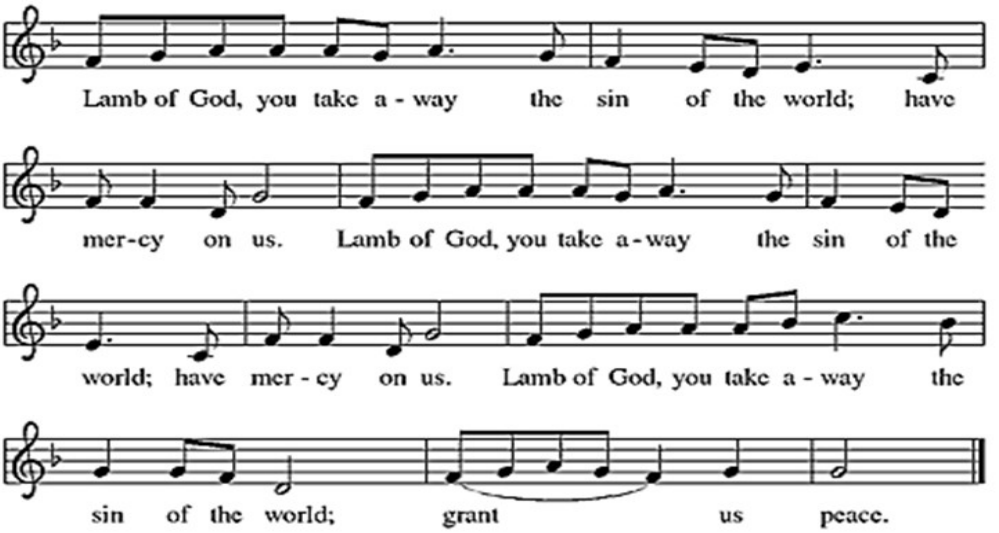
C Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

The assembly is seated.

LAMB OF GOD



DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

As the ushers direct you, come to the altar using the side aisles and return to your seat via the central aisle. The assisting ministers offer both wine (first) and grape juice (second) from pouring cups. Take a communion glass from one of the trays at the corners as you approach the rail. Leave the empty glass on the lower rail. Wheat-free wafers are available, simply tell the pastor.

COMMUNION HYMNS **ELW 494** *For the Bread Which You Have Broken*

ELW 464 *Bread of Life, Our Host and Meal*

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

Holy God, we have received your never-ending mercy in this meal. You continuously seek the lost, bind the injured, and feed your people abundantly. Now send us out, awake to your presence, now and forever.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

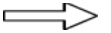
The assembly stands.

+ SENDING +

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

P The holy Trinity, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you with wisdom to welcome the reign of God, today and always.

C Amen.

SENDING HYMN ACS 949 *Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning* 

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.
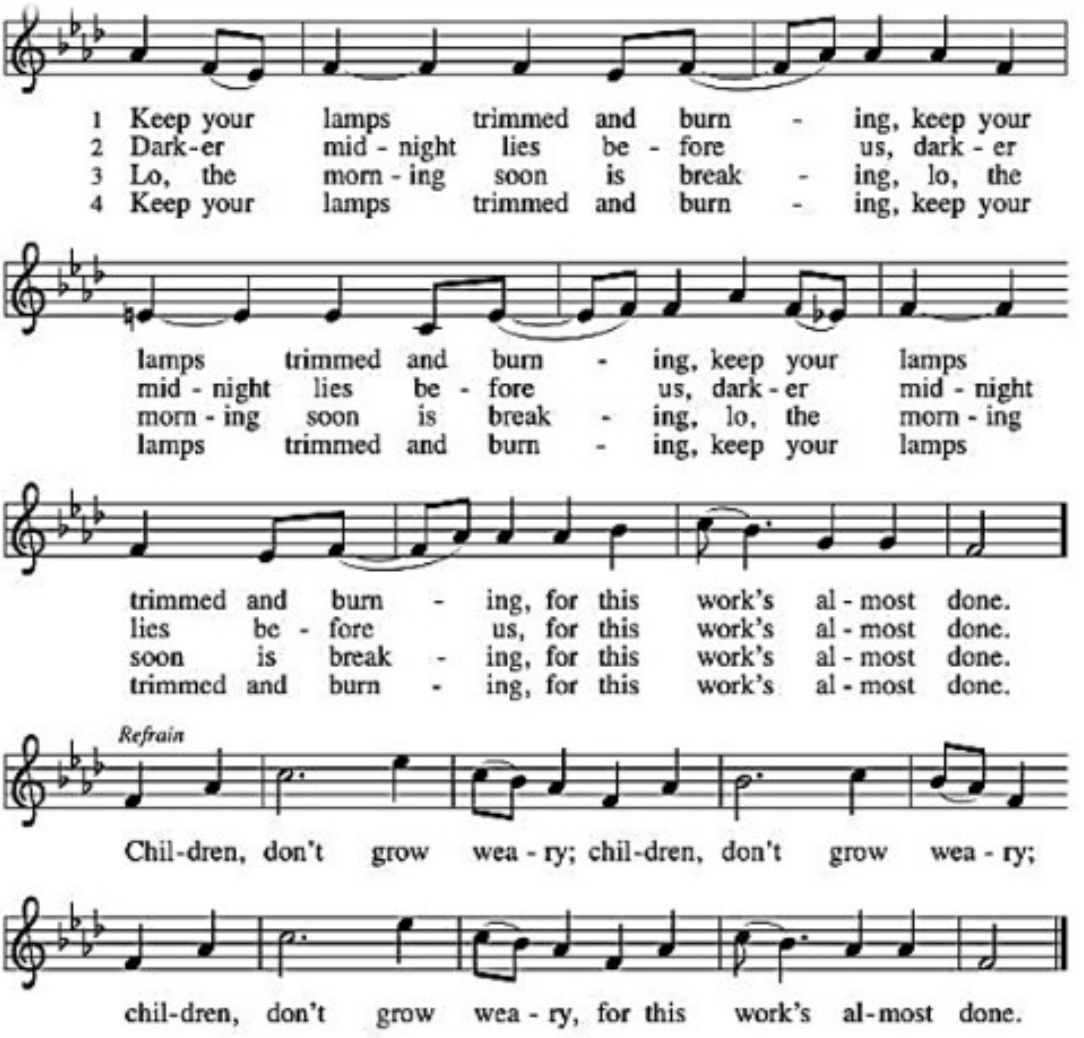
A Go in peace. Encourage one another.

C Thanks be to God!

+ + +

Sundays and Seasons v.20200805.1416
Copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

SENDING HYMN ACS 949 *Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning*



Text: African American spiritual
Music: KEEP YOUR LAMPS, African American spiritual



With today's altar flowers, the Reeces are celebrating their family's fall birthdays.

Next Sunday's Readings, Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost:

[Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18]
[Psalm 90:1-8 [9-11] 12]
[1 Thessalonians 5:1-11]
[Matthew 25:14-30]



SERVING EVERY SUNDAY

Pastor Tom, presiding and preaching

Katharine Gossman, piano

Karl Barton, flute

Denise Bookwalter, announcements

Choir: Karl Barton, Melissa Barton, Tom Buchanan, Mark Canning, Austin Cowan, Kirsten Ebbesen, Rita Ford, Alison Haney, Rudy Hehn, Susan Hehn, Colleen Holdcraft, Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Olivia James, Lawana Lamb-Daniels, Graham Reece, Jen Reece, Donna Schiffer, Simone Schuster, Sylvia Smith, Dave Suhrweir, Cassandra White.

SERVING TODAY AND ONE WEEK FROM TODAY		
Serving	**November 8**	**November 15**
Assisting Minister	Colleen Holdcraft	Beth Alexander
Cup Minister	Beth Alexander	Susan Warren
Cantor	Cassandra White	Susan Hehn
Lector	Rudy Hehn	Jennifer Buchanan
Acolyte		
Tech Team	Cindy Suhrweir Caroline Collins	Mark Greeley Ben Bush
Ushers	Colin Hackley Rob Schiffer	Ann DelRossi Bob Eshleman
Altar Guild	Colleen Holdcraft Susan Warren	Anita Sawh Rita Ford
Counters	Margaret Bowers Diane Hines	Janet Barber Susan Warren

PRAYER REQUESTS

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

In treatment for cancer: Matthew Canning (son of Sue and Mark Canning); Scott Simmons (son of Sharon Simmons); Gordon Fleischer; Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; David McManus (friend of Audrey Post); Shannon Miller (friend of Barb ODonnell).

Health and protection: For Frank "Rame" Meyers, in long-term care. For those encountering fear & uncertainty around government cuts and the future of Medicaid. For immigrants and refugees who are working and raising families in the United States, that they may be safe and secure without unnecessary deportations.

For prisoners: All those on Death Row.

Other concerns: Joann Stomberg (friend of Margaret Bowers), after the death of her husband; Jayden Schiffer (grandson of Rob and Donna Schiffer), experiencing unresolved and serious digestive problems; Pr. Trixie Richter (friend of Cheryl), on the unexpected death of her husband, Adrian; St. Philip Lutheran Church, Mt. Dora, as they grieve their pastor's loss; Cheryl Stuart and family, following the death of her friend Linda Bobbit; Charlie Cogswell, son of Judee Light, for continued healing; Haley Larsen (daughter of Rob Schiffer's cousin), experiencing serious gastrointestinal problems; Sharon Simmons and family, following the death of her sister, Sue Berent; Kevin Robinson (son of Erik Robinson), in need of encouragement; Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Walt Steinvorth (friend of Rob Schiffer), suffering from pericarditis and vestibular neuritis and learning to cope with dizziness and severe equilibrium problems; Karen Elizabeth Olson.

Church concerns: St. Stephen Church Council; the Florida-Bahamas Synod Council; all congregations searching for ways to stay connected and proclaim the Good News; Reconciling Works; Bishops Pedro Suarez and Yehiel Curry; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA advocacy offices and ministry.

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 Gaza and the Middle East.

Calendar for November 8 - November 15

08	Sun.	9:00 am	Bible study
		9:30 am	Choir rehearsal
		10:00 am	Worship, Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
		11:30 am	Worship and Music meeting
11	Wed.	7:00 pm	Choir rehearsal
12	Thurs,	10:00 am	Bible study
15	Sun.	9:00 am	Bible study
		9:30 am	Choir rehearsal
		10:00 am	Worship, Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERING ENVELOPES: If you need any offering envelopes, please let Rita know. You may notice that the printed dates on them have been blocked out. We're doing that intentionally so we can make full use of our current supply and avoid wasting them.

FLOWER CHART FOR 2026: 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 2026 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***

CHURCH COUNCIL	
President, Denise Bookwalter	
Treasurer, Jennifer Dritt	**Buildings Coordinator,** Sandy Lamb-Daniels
Worship & Music, Susan Hehn	**Grounds Coordinator,** Rob Schiffer
Care & Hospitality, Lawana Lamb-Daniels	**Outreach,** Sharon Simmons
Mutual Ministry, Sylvia Smith	**Education & Discipleship,** Emily Stover
Communications, Colleen Holdcraft	**Youth,** Graham Reece