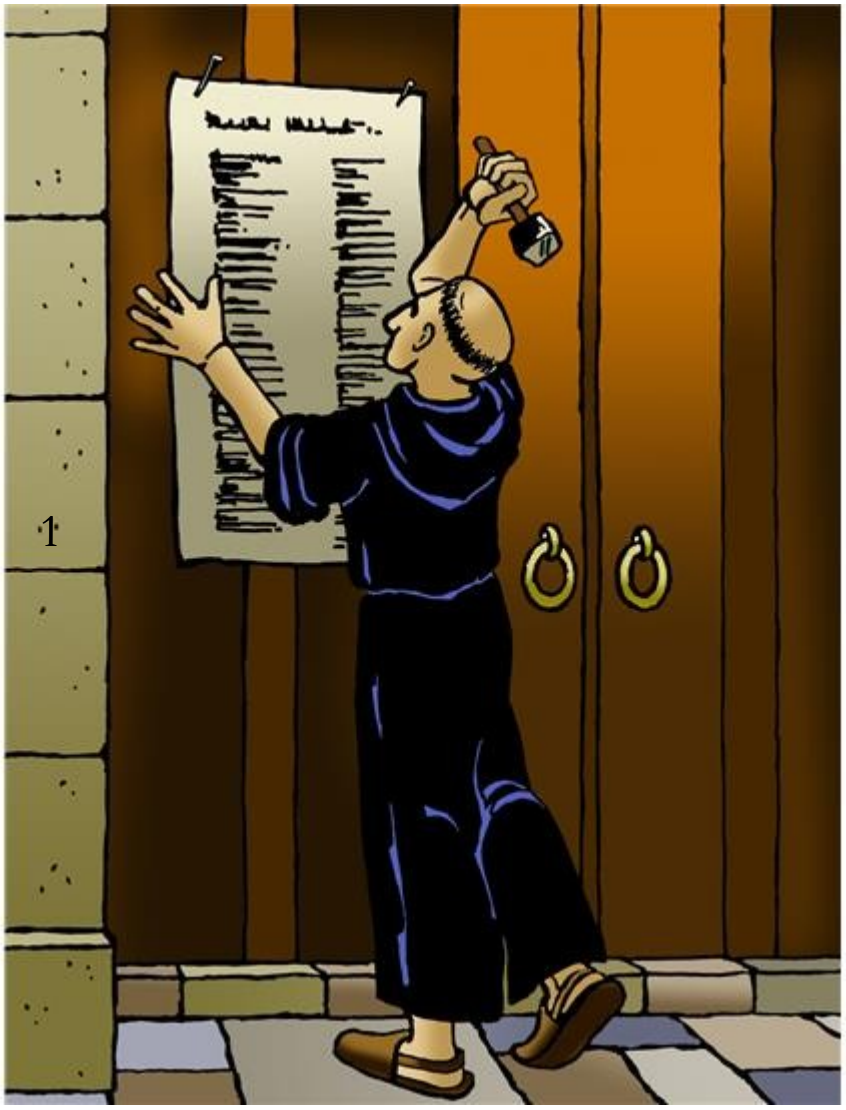
ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

REFORMATION SUNDAY



October 25, 2026

10 a.m.

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 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.

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

Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world. We celebrate the good news of God's grace, that Jesus Christ sets us free every day to do this life-transforming work. Trusting in the freedom given to us in baptism, we pray for the church, that Christians will unite more fully in worship and mission.

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,who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

C Amen.

P Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith,let us confess our sin.

Silence for reflection.

P Compassionate God,

C we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people,following the way of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

P Hear this good news:We have peace with God through ☩ Jesus Christ,in whom there is no condemnation,but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

C Amen.

GATHERING HYMN ELW 504 *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*



Text: Martin Luther, 1483-1546, tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
Music: EIN FESTE BURG, Martin Luther

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.

Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME



+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34

The renewed covenant will not be breakable, but like the old covenant it will expect the people to live upright lives. To know the Lord means that one will defend the cause of the poor and needy (Jer. 22:16). The renewed covenant is possible only because the Lord will forgive iniquity and not remember sin. Our hope lies in a God who forgets.

31 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of
Israel and the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors
when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they
broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with
the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write
it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 No longer shall they
teach one another or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the
least of them to the greatest, says the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin
no more.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 46 *We sing the psalm responsively.*



Leader [1] God is our ref- | uge and strength,
a very present | help in trouble.

C [2] **Therefore we will not fear, though the | earth be moved,**
and though the mountains shake in the depths | of the sea;

L [3] though its waters | rage and foam,
and though the mountains tremble | with its tumult.

C [4] **There is a river whose streams make glad the cit- | y of God,**
the holy habitation of | the Most High.

L [5] God is in the midst of the city; it shall | not be shaken;
God shall help it at the | break of day.

C [6] **The nations rage, and the | kingdoms shake;**
God speaks, and the earth | melts away.

L [7] The Lord of | hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob | is our stronghold.

C [8] **Come now, regard the works | of the Lord,**
what desolations God has brought up- | on the earth;

L [9] behold the one who makes war to cease in | all the world;
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the | shields with fire.

C [10] **"Be still, then, and know that | I am God;**
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted | in the earth."

L [11] The Lord of | hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob | is our stronghold.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

Amen.

SECOND READING Romans 3:19-28

Paul's words stand at the heart of the preaching of Martin Luther and other Reformation leaders. No human beings make themselves right with God through works of the law. We are brought into a right relationship with God through the divine activity centered in Christ's death. This act is a gift of grace that liberates us from sin and empowers our faith in Jesus Christ.

19 Now we know that, whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that
every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For no
human will be justified before him by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the
knowledge of sin. 21 But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed
and is attested by the Law and the Prophets, 22 the righteousness of God through the faith of
Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, 23 since all have sinned and fall short
of the glory of God; 24 they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is
in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective
through faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he
had passed over the sins previously committed; 26 it was to demonstrate at the present time his
own righteousness, so that he is righteous and he justifies the one who has the faith of Jesus.
27 Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. Through what kind of law? That of works?
No, rather through the law of faith. 28 For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from
works prescribed by the law.

R The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: John 8:31-36

Jesus speaks of truth and freedom as spiritual realities known through his word. He reveals the truth that sets people free from sin.

P The holy gospel according to Luke, the eighth chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

31 Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my
disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." 33 They answered him,
"We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by
saying, 'You will be made free'?" 34 Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, everyone who
commits sin is a slave to sin. 35 The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the
son has a place there forever. 36 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

P The gospel of the Lord.

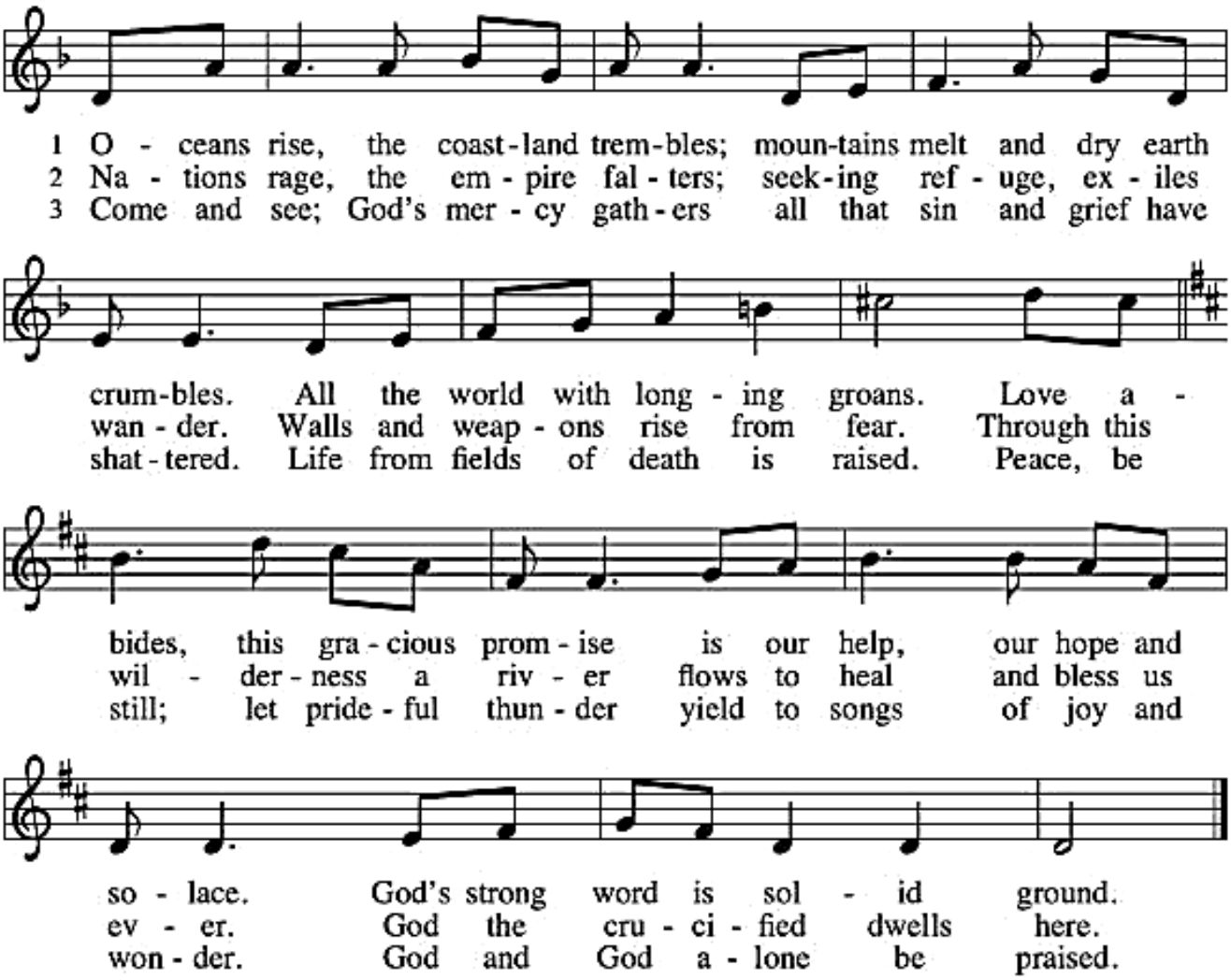
C Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

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

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY ACS 1023 *God Alone Be Praised*



Text: Susan R. Briehl, b. 1952, based on Psalm 46
Music: AD LUCEM, Zebulon M. Highben, b. 1979
Text © 2016 Susan R. Briehl, admin. Augsburg Fortress
Music © 2016 Zebulon M. Highben, admin. Augsburg Fortress

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NICENE CREED

A Let us confess our faith.

C We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Seeking the Spirit of God who makes all things new, we pray for the church and the world.

(A brief silence)

Gracious God, as we remember the Reformation, remind us of the ways we are being reformed still. Keep us accountable to your Word and your mission. Protect us as we speak truth to power. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for the beauty of the islands, coastlines, and low-lying places. Write it on the heart to keep inhabitants safe. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We thank you for diversity of all kinds. We pray for the future of endangered languages and cultures. Preserve racial identity to show forth your glory. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Protect those facing war and hunger in Sudan and Gaza; shelter families in Ukraine as winter approaches; bring safety to communities in Haiti and Congo; open paths of medicine and relief in Yemen. St. Stephen, who else would welcome our prayers today?

(Pause for people to speak petitions.)

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for retired clergy and their families, especially Marda Messick and Jim Christianson, honoring their faithful service to your church. Bless them as they find new ways to live into their vocation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

A few at a time, each week, we pray for people within the St. Stephen worship community. We pray today for Kirsten Mathis and Mike Bonfanti, Cam Metcalfe and Mia Fuller and for their extended families. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We thank you for the faithful departed who taught us to love God and our neighbor. By their example, help us to seek after you with heart, soul, and mind. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Trusting in your boundless grace, O God, we lift up these spoken prayers and those in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN!

The peace of Christ be with you, always!

And also with you!

Let us share the peace of God with one another.

The assembly is seated.



+ MEAL +

Stephen Saint
@Stephen-Saint

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

OFFERING

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

ANTHEM *"Grace Upon Grace" Lyrics by Ron Hartung, Music by Tom Buchanan*

The world says the prize goes to those
who are clever, or ruthless, or mighty, or wealthy, or wise.
But you tell the world,
"Let your heart sing a child's song."

The world never listens. And neither do I.
Yet you stay, and you say I am yours.
You shaped me and reshape me over and over again.
And I grow as I flow in your grace.

"Heaven," you whisper, "is already yours.
So why chase the salvation I've already brought?
Why fear the tomorrow I've already bought?"
"Trust me," you whisper. But trust we cannot.
Yet you stay, and you say we are yours.

You shaped us and reshape us over and over and over and over again.
And you lift us with gifts of grace.
Of grace upon grace, upon grace,
Upon grace.

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.

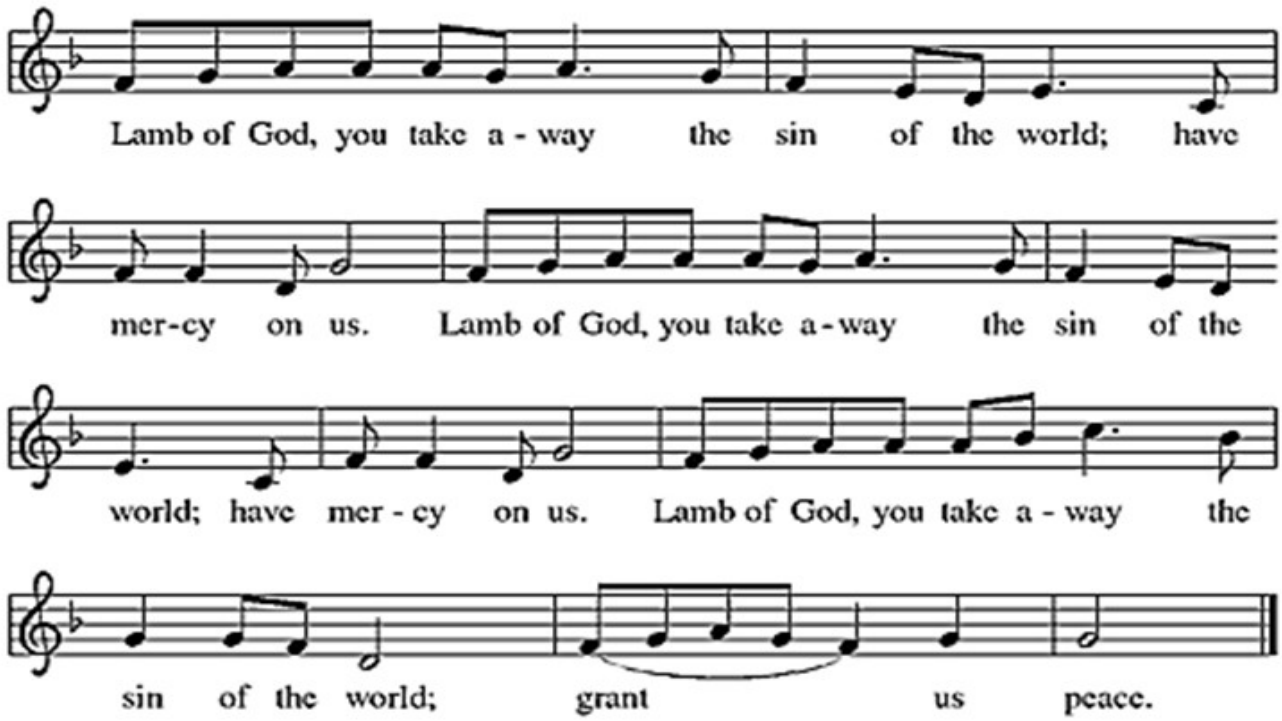
C Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are 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 and grape juice 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. If you do not wish to receive the meal, simply fold your arms over your chest to receive a blessing from the pastor.

COMMUNION HYMNS **ELW 654** *The Church's One Foundation*

ELW 779 *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound*

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

Sustaining God,with this bread and cup,you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love,following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly stands.

+ SENDING +

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

P The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus.

C Amen.

P The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit.

C Amen.

The God of grace ☩ bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

SENDING HYMN **ELW 665** *Rise, Shine, You People!* *(please see next page)*

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.

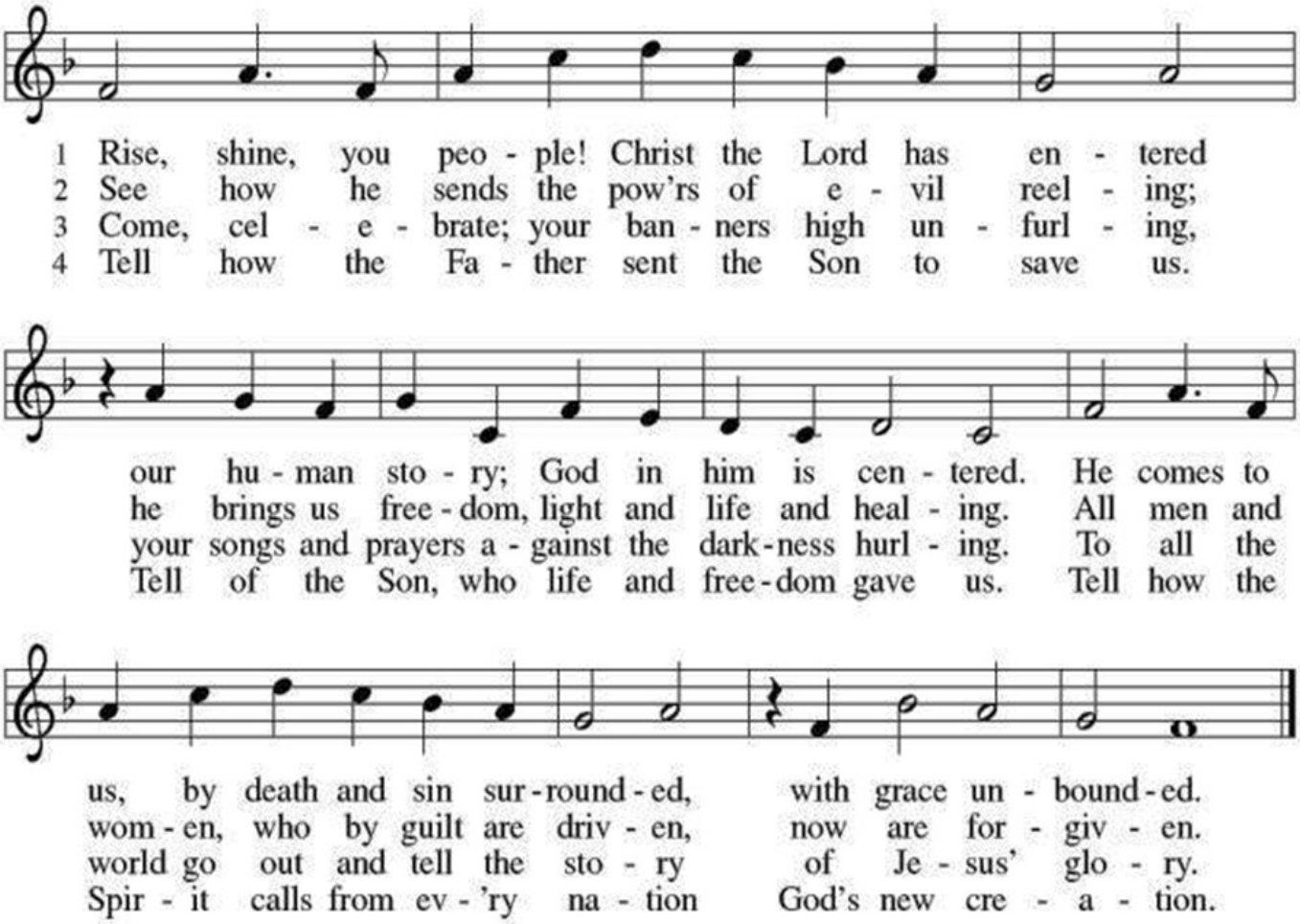
A Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

C Thanks be to God!

+ + +

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SENDING HYMN **ELW 665** *Rise, Shine, You People!*



Text: Ronald A. Klug, b. 1939, alt.
Music: WOJTKIEWIECZ, Dale Wood, 1934–2003
Text and music © 1974 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress.



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

Next Sunday's Readings, All Saints Sunday:

Revelation 7:9-17
Psalm 34:1-10, 22
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12



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	**October 25**	**November 1**
Assisting Minister	Rob Schiffer	Kirsten Ebbesen
Cup Minister	Colleen Holdcraft	Rob Schiffer
Cantor	Simone Schuster	
Lector	Erik Robinson	Emery Oates
Acolyte		
Tech Team	Sandy Lamb-Daniels Caroline Collins	Ben Bush Colin Hackley
Ushers	Audrey Post Jacob Nallapu	
Altar Guild	Beth Alexander	Linda Eshleman Barbara Sullivan
Counters	Kirsten Ebbesen Susan Warren	Rob Schiffer Patricia Handschy

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 October 25 - November 1

25	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
		9:30 am	Choir rehearsal
		10:00 am	Worship, Reformation Sunday
28	Wed.	6:00 pm	Confirmation Class
		7:00 pm	Choir practice
29	Thurs.	10:00 am	Bible study
Nov. 01	Sun.	9:00 am	Bible study
		9:30 am	Choir rehearsal
		10:00 am	Worship, All Saints Sunday

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALL SAINTS: We are now accepting names of loved ones for remembrance during the All Saints service on Nov. 1. Please email or call Rita with names by Wednesday, Oct. 28.

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***

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