

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



August 30, 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

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of the incurable wound of his suffering yet finds in God's words the delight of his heart. When Peter doesn't grasp Jesus' words about suffering, Jesus tells the disciples they will find their lives in losing them. Such sacrificial love is described by Paul when he urges us to associate with the lowly and not repay evil with evil. In worship we gather as a community that we might offer ourselves for the sake of our suffering world.

WELCOME

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.

Pastor Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, whose compassion endures forever.

Congregation Amen.

P Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

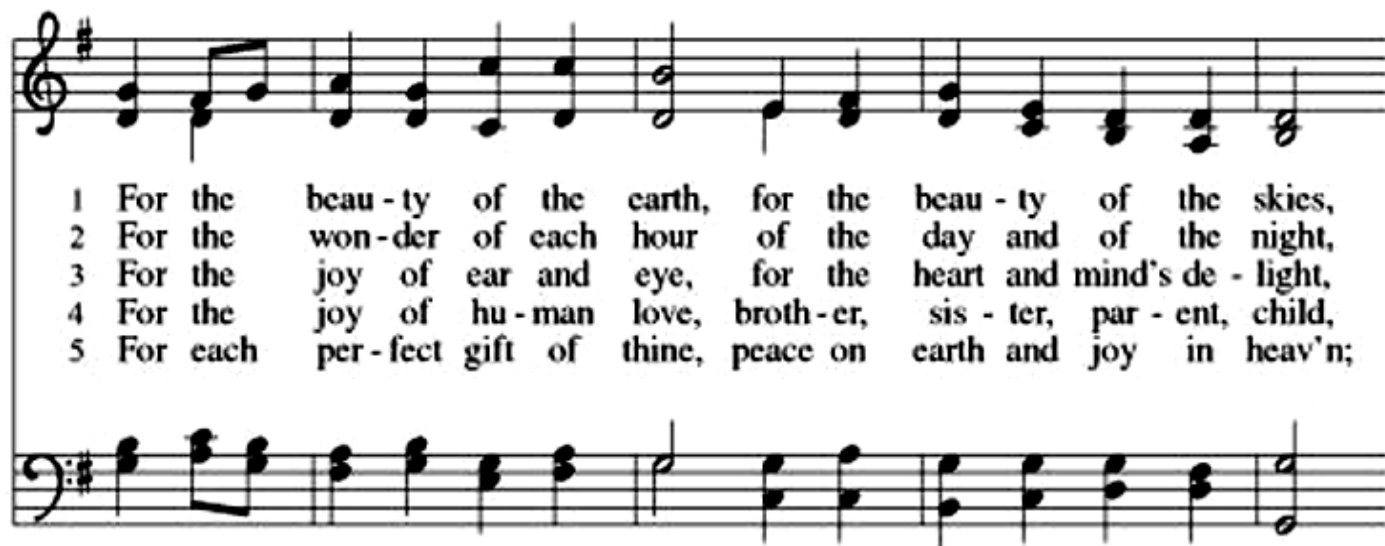
P Compassionate God,

C we confess to you all our sins. Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves. In your mercy, call us back to you. Your yoke is easy and your burden is light. Restore us to dwell in your peace. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

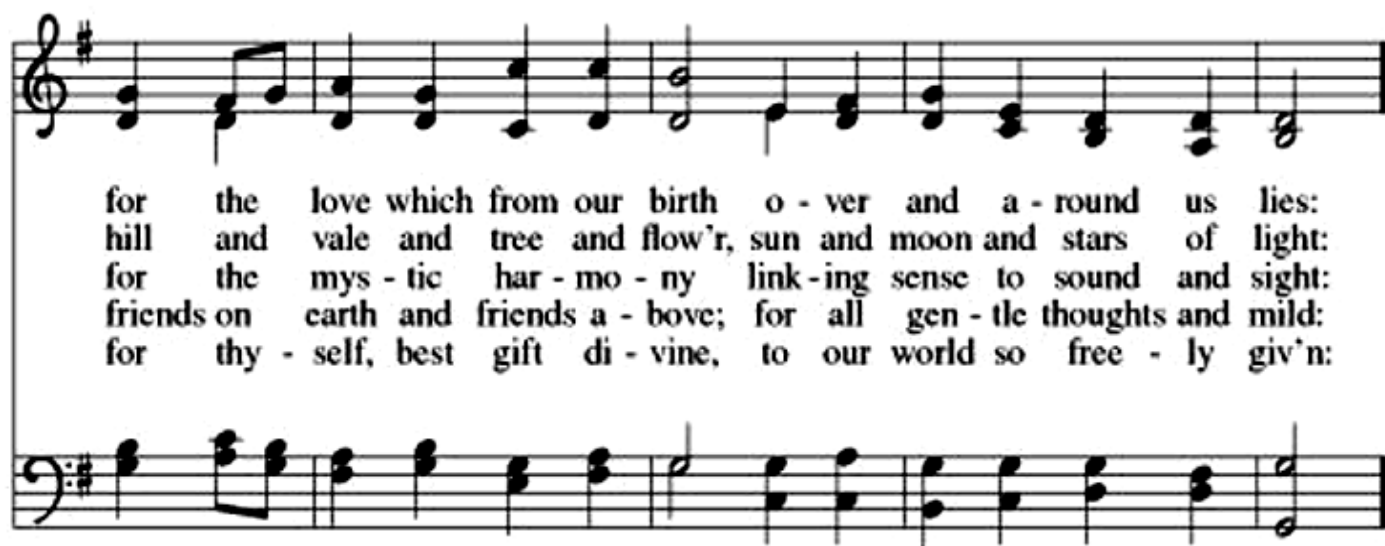
P Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." In the name of God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. Rest in God's love.

C Amen.

GATHERING HYMN ELW 879 *For the Beauty of the Earth*



1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the beau - ty of the skies,
 2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,
 3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
 4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
 5 For each per - fect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n;



for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
 hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:
 for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:
 friends on earth and friends a - bove; for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
 for thy - self, best gift di - vine, to our world so free - ly giv'n:

Refrain



Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

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

Congregation:

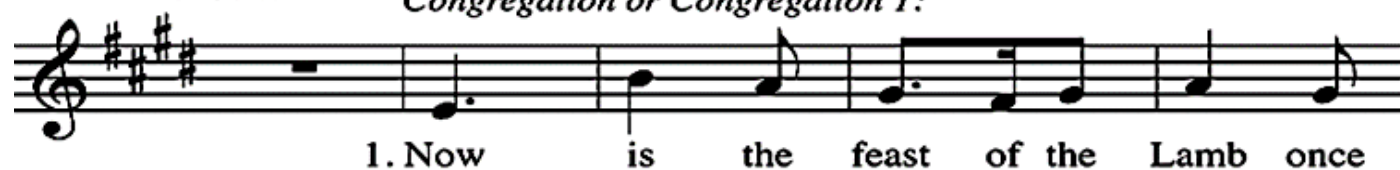


Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy
to the God of life and love and
free-dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -
er - more!

Text and Music: Marty Haugen; © 1990, GIA Publications, Inc.

Verse 1

Congregation or Congregation 1:



1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once

slain, whose blood has freed and u -
 nit - ed us to be one great peo - ple of
 God. *to Refrain*

Verse 2

Congregation or Congregation 2:

2. Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and
 might, all hon - or and glo - ry to Christ
 for ev - er. *to Refrain*

Verse 3

Congregation:

3. For God has come to dwell with us, to
 make us peo - ple of God; to make
 all things new. *to Refrain*

PRAYER OF THE DAY



P Let us pray.

O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME

Noisy Offering



+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 15:15-21

Jeremiah's delight in the word of the Lord is contradicted by the heaviness of God's hand upon him and God's seeming unfaithfulness. God's tough love to Jeremiah says that if he repents, he will be allowed to continue in his strenuous ministry. Jeremiah is strengthened by the simple words, "I am with you."

¹⁵ O Lord, you know; remember me and visit me, and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance do not take me away; know that on your account I suffer insult. ¹⁶ Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts. ¹⁷ I did not sit in the company of merry-makers, nor did I rejoice; under the weight of your hand I sat alone, for you had filled me with indignation. ¹⁸ Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail.

¹⁹ Therefore thus says the Lord: If you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me. If you utter what is precious and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth. It is they who will turn to you, not you who will turn to them. ²⁰ And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the Lord. ²¹ I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM:

Psalm 26:1-8

We sing the psalm responsively.



Leader

¹ Give judgment for me, O Lord, for I have lived | with integrity;
I have trusted in the Lord and | have not faltered.

C

**²Test me, O | Lord, and try me;
examine my heart | and my mind.**

L

³For your steadfast love is be- | fore my eyes;
I have walked faithful- | ly with you.

C

**⁴ I have not sat | with the worthless,
nor do I consort with | the deceitful.**

L

⁵ I have hated the company of 1 evildoers;
I will not sit down 1 with the wicked.

C

⁶ I will wash my hands in inno- | cence, O Lord,
that I may go in procession | round your altar,

L

⁷ singing aloud a song | of thanksgiving
and recounting all your won- | derful deeds.

C

⁸ Lord, I love the house in | which you dwell
and the place where your glo- | ry abides.

Spoken after the psalm is sung.

Amen.

SECOND READING: Romans 12:9-21

Paul presents benchmarks for faithful relationships with Christians and non-Christians. Love is the unflagging standard of our behavior. When we encounter evil, we do not resort to its tactics but seek to overcome it with good. While Christians cannot control the actions and attitudes of others, we seek to live at peace with all people.

⁹ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be arrogant, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ Instead, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink, for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

R The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Congregation:

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we
go? You have the words of e - ter - nal
life. Al - le - lu - ia! *Optional Repeat*

Text and Music: Marty Haugen; © 1990, GIA Publications, Inc.

GOSPEL: Matthew 16:21-28

After Peter confesses that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:16), Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of his ministry. These words prove hard to accept, even for a disciple whom Jesus has called a “rock.”

P The holy gospel according to Matthew, the sixteenth chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

²¹ From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? ²⁷ “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸ Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

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 ELW 798 *Will You Come and Follow Me*



1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call
 2 "Will you leave your - self be - hind if I but call
 3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call
 4 "Will you love the you you hide if I but call
 5 Lord, your sum - mons ech - oes true when you but call

your name? Will you go where you don't
 your name? Will you care for cruel and
 your name? Will you set the pris - 'ners
 my name. Let me quell the fear in -
 low

know and nev - er be the same?
 kind and nev - er be the same?
 free and nev - er be the same?
 side and nev - er be the same?
 you and nev - er be the same.

Will you let my love be shown, will you let my
 Will you risk the hos - tile stare, should your life at -
 Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as -
 Will you use the faith you've found to re - shape the
 In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and

name be known, will you let my life be
 tract or scare? Will you let me an - swer
 this un - seen, and ad - mit to what I
 world a - round, through my sight and touch and
 foot - steps show. Thus I'll move and live and

grown in you and you in me?"
 pray'r in you and you in me?"
 mean in you and you in me?"
 sound in you and you in me?"
 grow in you and you in me.

Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949

Music: KELVINGROVE, Scottish traditional

Text © 1987 Iona Community, GIA Publications, Inc., 2221 N. 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638.

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

With bold trust in God's unfailing provision, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

(A brief silence)

For the church in every land, especially where true faith is persecuted. We pray that our mission is anchored in the love of Christ and that we are taught to take up our crosses and follow Jesus. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

For the well-being of creation, that all that lives and grows on earth may thrive. Bring relief to areas of drought, flood, fire, and storm. We pray especially for people in Nepal-Tibet following the flashfloods and landslides. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

For the nations and all in authority, that they seek to live in peace with one another. Bless the work of peacemakers and diplomatic organizations. Bring peace to Sudan, Ukraine, and the Middle East and all places scarred by violence. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You regard the lowly and hear those who cry out to you. Be present with those suffering from addiction, housing insecurity, incarceration, and mental illness. Help us know we are not alone. St. Stephen, who else would welcome our prayers today?

(Pause for people to speak petitions.)

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You draw together people with different gifts. Lift up the varied gifts of this congregation and strengthen its bonds of fellowship. We pray for our counters and finance committee volunteers.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

A few at a time, each week, we pray for people within the St. Stephen worship community. We pray today for Ruth and Ron Hartung, Susan and Rudy Hehn, and their extended families.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Your steadfast love endures forever. We give you thanks for the faithful who died in the hope of the promise. Strengthen us in faith until the day we join them at your eternal banquet. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Receive our prayers and answer, O God, as you have promised. All this we ask in the name of your Son, 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.



Stephen Saint
@Stephen-Saint



venmo

+ MEAL +

OFFERING

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

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

OFFERING HYMN

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

Refrain

Congregation:

Musical notation for the Refrain of the Offering Hymn. It consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below each staff.

As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were
gath-ered in-to one to be-come our bread;
so may all your peo-ple from all the ends of earth be
gath-ered in-to one in you.

Verses

Musical notation for the Verses of the Offering Hymn. It consists of two staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below each staff.

1. As this cup of bless-ing is shared with-in our midst
2. Let this be a fore-taste of all that is to come when
to Refrain
may we share the pres-ence of your love.
all cre-a-tion shares this feast with you.

Text and Music: Marty Haugen; © 1990, GIA Publications, Inc.

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

Congregation:

The musical score is written for a congregation and consists of five staves of music. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 6/8. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est! Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est!' The music ends with a double bar line.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and

might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!

Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. Ho -

san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est!

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 Heaven has come near. Come, share in the feast!

The assembly is seated.

LAMB OF GOD

Congregation: *Congregation or Assistant:*



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
you break the chains of ha - tred and
you are the way of jus - tice and
you are the way of mer - cy and

Congregation:



world: have mer - cy on us, mer - cy on us,
fear:
peace:
love.

Final Stanza

Congregation or Assistant:

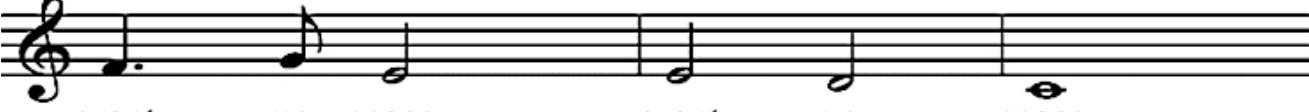


mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you

Congregation:



take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace,



grant us peace, grant us peace.

Text and Music: Marty Haugen; © 1990, GIA Publications, Inc.

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 659 *Will You Let Me Be Your Servant*

ELW 808 *Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song*

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly stands.

+ SENDING +

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

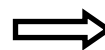
P Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, ✠ one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always.

C Amen.

SENDING HYMN

ELW 710

Let Streams of Living Justice





1 Let streams of liv - ing jus - tice flow down up - on the earth;
 2 For heal - ing of the na - tions, for peace that will not end,
 3 Your ci - ty's built to mu - sic; we are the stones you seek;

give free-dom's light to cap - tives, let all the poor have worth.
 for love that makes us lov - ers, God grant us grace to mend.
 your har - mo - ny is lan - guage; we are the words you speak.

The hun - gry's hands are plead - ing, the work - ers claim their rights,
 Weave our var - ied gifts to - geth - er; knit our lives as they are spun;
 Our faith we find in ser - vice, our hope in oth - ers' dreams,

the mourn - ers long for laugh - ter, the blind - ed seek for sight.
 on your loom of time en - roll us till our thread of life is run.
 our love in hand of neigh - bor; our home-land bright-ly gleams.

Make lib - er - ty a bea - con, strike down the i - ron pow'r;
 O great weav - er of our fab - ric, bind church and world in one;
 In - scribe our hearts with jus - tice; your way—the path un - tried;

a - bol - ish an - cient ven - geance: pro - claim your peo - ple's hour.
 dye our tex - ture with your ra - diance, light our col - ors with your sun.
 your truth—the heart of strang - er; your life—the Cru - ci - fied.

Text: William Whitla, b. 1934

Music: THAXTED, Gustav Holst, 1874–1934

Text © 1980 William Whitla

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 Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!

C Thanks be to God.

+ + +

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**An anonymous couple dedicated today's altar flowers
for Katharine and Karl,
"in gratitude for our beautiful music every Sunday."**

Calendar for August 30 - September 6

August	30	Sun.	9 am	Bible study
			10 am	Worship, Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
			11 am	Potluck
August	31	Tues	6 p.m.	Confirmation for adults
Sept.	3	Thurs.	10 am	Bible study
Sept.	6	Sun.	9 am	Bible study
			10 am	Worship, Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

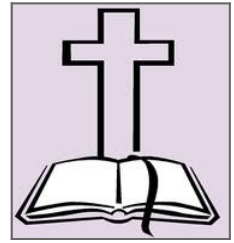
Next Sunday's Readings, Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost:

[Ezekiel 33:7-11](#)

[Psalms 119:33-40](#)

[Romans 13:8-14](#)

[Matthew 18:15-20](#)



SERVING EVERY SUNDAY

Pastor Tom, presiding and preaching

Katharine Gossman, piano

Karl Barton, flute

Denise Bookwalter, announcements

Choir: The choir is taking a well-deserved rest during the summer:

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

SERVING TODAY AND ONE WEEK FROM TODAY

Serving	August 30	September 6
Assisting Minister	Kirsten Ebbesen	Beth Alexander
Cup Minister	Loraine Sundberg	Susan Warren
Cantor	Simone Schuster	Kirsten Ebbesen
Lector	Jen/Elliot Reece	Erik Robinson
Acolyte		
Tech Team	Audrey Post Sandy Lamb-Daniels	Colin Hackley Cindy Suhrweir
Ushers	Patrick Kennell Colin Hackley	Ann Del Rossi Jacob Nallapu
Altar Guild	Anita Sawh Rita Ford	Colleen Holdcraft Susan Warren
Counters	Patricia Handschy Rob Schiffer	Kirsten Ebbesen Rob Schiffer

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); Kevin Vislocky (friend of Bob and Linda Eshleman); 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); Roger Stomberg (friend of Margaret Bowers).

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: For 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. Prayers for 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, who is in rehab in Carrabelle for brain injury; Haley Larsen (daughter of Rob Schiffer's cousin), experiencing serious gastrointestinal problems; Jeanette Sickel and family following the death of her cousin, Elaine Harris; 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); Allana Lochan-Tekaram (sister of Anita Sawh and Rita Ford), with hormone imbalance; 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 on the sidewalk near 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/sermons>. 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/songs-of-st-stephen>.

For your peace of mind: St. Stephen has installed the REME HALO Air Purification System in its heating and air-conditioning systems to guard against virus spread in the sanctuary, fellowship hall and office spaces. Details: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wa3nomhaDqY&t=8s>

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



Our Guiding Principles

1. Jesus is Lord of our lives.
2. We welcome absolutely everyone.
3. We enjoy a celebratory relationship with God through worship.
4. We support and encourage community both in and beyond our congregation.
5. We are called to use our God-given gifts of time, talent, and treasure to serve all of God's people and seek justice for them.
6. Creativity and new ideas are a vital part of our life together as a congregation.