

# ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT



SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2024

10 A.M.

## INTRODUCTION

*The fourth of the Old Testament promises providing a baptismal lens this Lent is the promise God makes to Moses: those who look on the bronze serpent will live. In today's gospel Jesus says he will be lifted up on the cross like the serpent, so that those who look to him in faith will live. When we receive the sign of the cross in baptism, that cross becomes the sign we can look to in faith for healing, for restored relationship to God, for hope when we are dying.*

## 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 writes the law on our hearts, who draws all people together through Jesus.

C **Amen.**

P Held in God's mercy, 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 are caught in snares of sin and cannot break free. We hoard resources while our neighbors are hungry and cold. We speak in ways that silence others. We are silent when we should speak up. We keep score in our hearts. We let hurts grow into hatred. For all these things and for sins only you know, forgive us, Lord. Amen.**

P Here is a flood of grace: Out of love for the whole world, God draws near to us, breaks every snare of sin, washes away our wrongs, and restores the promise of life through + Jesus Christ.

C **Amen.**

1 Give to our God im - mor - tal praise! Mer - cy and  
 2 He sent his Son with pow'r to save from guilt and  
 3 Give to the Lord of lords re - nown; the King of

truth are all his ways. Won - ders of grace to  
 dark - ness and the grave. Won - ders of grace to  
 kings with glo - ry crown. His mer - cies ev - er

God be - long; re - peat his mer - cies in your song.  
 God be - long; re - peat his mer - cies in your song.  
 shall en - dure when lords and kings are known no more!

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

Music: DUKE STREET, attr. John Hatton, d. 1793

## 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



Ⓐ Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son:    Ⓞ Lord, have mer - cy.  
Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:



Ⓐ Chri - ste e - le - i - son:    Ⓞ Christ, have mer - cy.  
Christ, . . . . have mer - cy:



Ⓐ Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son:    Ⓞ Lord, have mer - cy.  
Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:



## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**P** Let us pray.

O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, 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: Numbers 21:4-9**

*Though God provides food and water for the Israelites in the wilderness, they whine and grumble. They forget about the salvation they experienced in the exodus. God punishes them for their sin, but when they repent God also provides a means of healing: a bronze serpent lifted up on a pole.*

<sup>4</sup>From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup>The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” <sup>6</sup>Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup>The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” <sup>9</sup>So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Reader           The word of the Lord.

**C                Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22**

*We sing the psalm responsively.*



Leader <sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the LORD, for the <sup>1</sup>LORD is good,  
for God’s mercy en- <sup>1</sup>dures forever.

**C       <sup>2</sup>Let the redeemed of the <sup>1</sup>LORD proclaim  
that God redeemed them from the hand <sup>1</sup> of the foe,**

L       <sup>3</sup>gathering them in <sup>1</sup> from the lands;  
from the east and from the west, from the north and <sup>1</sup> from the south.

**C** <sup>17</sup>Some were fools and took re- | bellious paths;  
through their sins they | were afflicted.

**L** <sup>18</sup>They loathed all man- | ner of food  
and drew near | to death's door.

**C** <sup>19</sup>Then in their trouble they cried | to the LORD  
and you delivered them from | their distress.

**L** <sup>20</sup>You sent forth your | word and healed them  
and rescued them | from the grave.

**C** <sup>21</sup>Let them give thanks to you, LORD, for your | steadfast love  
and your wonderful works | for all people.

**L** <sup>22</sup>Let them offer sacrifices | of thanksgiving  
and tell of your deeds with | shouts of joy.

*Spoken after the psalm is sung:*

**Amen.**

## **SECOND READING: Ephesians 2:1-10**

*While we were dead in our sinfulness, God acted to make us alive as a gift of grace in Christ Jesus. We are saved not by what we do but by grace through faith. Thus our good works are really a reflection of God's grace at work in our lives.*

<sup>1</sup>You were dead through the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup>All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. <sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—<sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not the result of works,

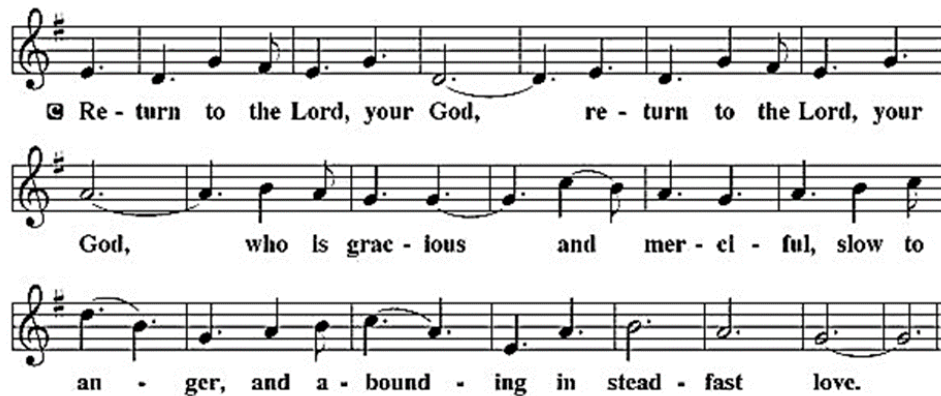
so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Reader           The word of the Lord.

**C               Thanks be to God.**

*The assembly stands.*

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



☩ Re - turn to the Lord, your God,           re - turn to the Lord, your  
God,           who is grac - ious           and mer - ci - ful, slow to  
an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast           love.

### GOSPEL:    John 3:14-21

*To explain the salvation of God to the religious leader, Nicodemus, Jesus refers to the scripture passage quoted in today's first reading. Just as those who looked upon the bronze serpent were healed, so people will be saved when they behold Christ lifted up on the cross.*

P           The holy gospel according to John, the third chapter.

**C           Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] <sup>14</sup>Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup>Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup>Those who believe in him are not

condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup>And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. <sup>21</sup>But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

**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**      **666**      *What Wondrous Love Is This*



1 What won-drous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What  
 2 When I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when  
 3 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing; to  
 4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on; and

won - drous love is this, O my soul! What won-drous love is this  
 I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when I was sink - ing down  
 God and to the Lamb I will sing; to God and to the Lamb,  
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and when from death I'm free,

that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dread-ful curse for my  
 be - neath God's righ-teous frown, Christ laid a - side his crown for my  
 who is the great I AM, while mil - lions join the theme, I will  
 I'll sing God's love for me, and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing

soul, for my soul, to bear the dread-ful curse for my soul?  
 soul, for my soul, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul.  
 sing, I will sing, while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing.  
 on, I'll sing on; and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.

Text: North American folk hymn, 19th cent., alt.  
 Music: WONDROUS LOVE, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835; arr. Paul J. Christiansen, 1914-1997, alt.  
 Arr. © 1955 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

## **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: Hear us, O God.*

***Congregational response: Your mercy is great.***

## **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.*



+ MEAL +

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

**ANTHEM** *"Bring Us Home" - Light/Tate*

Bring us home from our wand'ring the valley of death;  
Come ransom the people you filled with your breath.  
Bring us home from our exile to love's warm embrace;  
Come gather your children who long for your face.

(Refrain)

Bring us home, bring us home,  
From valleys of death, bring us home!  
Bring us home, bring us home,  
Come fill us with breath, bring us home!

Bring us home from the darkness and bathe us in light,  
Though long we have stumbled, and strayed from your sight.  
Bring us home to the circle where love has no end,  
Where outcast and stranger are welcomed as friend. (Refrain)

Bring us home to the banquet, to bread and to wine,  
The fruit of the harvest, the fruit of the vine.  
Bring us home to the table, to Love's sacrifice,  
of blood and of body, where grace will suffice. (Refrain)

*We stand and sing as the collection and the gifts are brought forward*

## OFFERING HYMN



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 dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we  
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence,  
Lord, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

## 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. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. 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

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and  
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. 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.

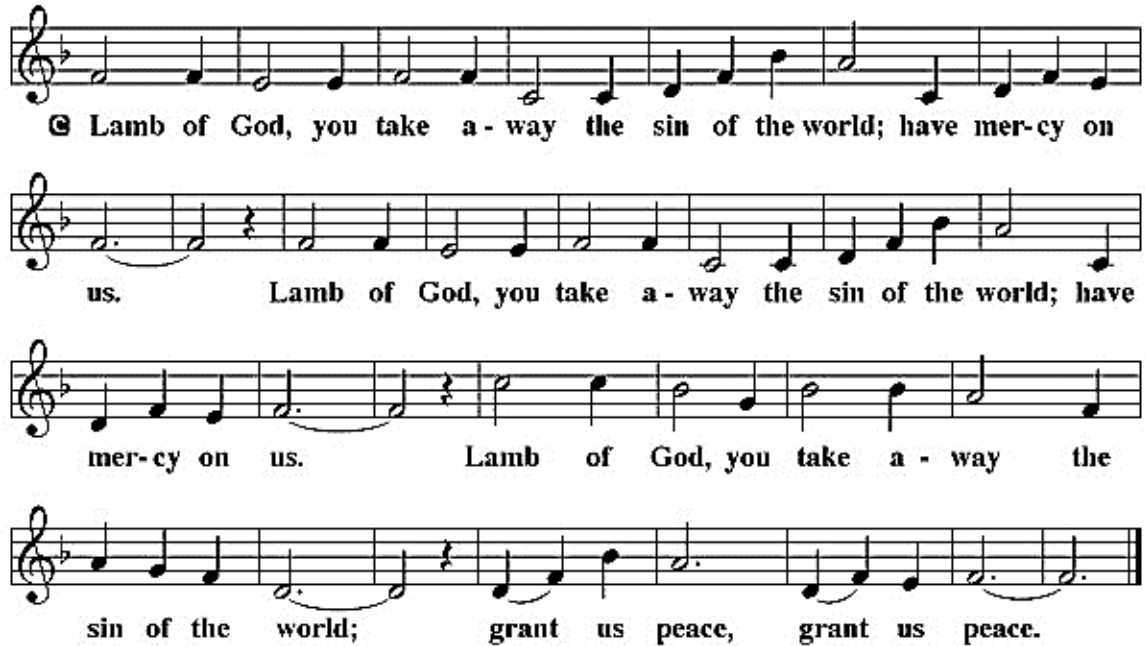
**C**     **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the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

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

**P**     Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

*The assembly is seated.*

## LAMB OF GOD



**♩** Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on  
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

## 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 minister offers a pouring cup (wine or grape juice). If you prefer to receive the wine or juice in an individual glass, take one from the tray as you approach the rail. Leave the empty glass on the rail. Wheat-free wafers are available--simply tell the pastor.*

<b>COMMUNION HYMNS</b>	<b>604</b>	<i>O Christ, Our Hope</i>
	<b>335</b>	<i>Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross</i>
	<b>726</b>	<i>Light Dawns on a Weary World</i>

*The assembly stands.*

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

A Let us pray.

Generous God, at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace. As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread, now make us one loaf to feed the world; in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

C **Amen.**

## **+ SENDING +**

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

P Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, renewed. God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with courage, and ✝ give you peace.

C **Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*The assembly stands.*



1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that  
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and  
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I  
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his  
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that  
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me  
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and  
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

now am found; was blind, but now I see.  
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!  
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.  
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt., sts. 1–4; anonymous, st. 5

Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835; arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1851–1921, alt.

## 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. Share your bread.

**C Thanks be to God.**

+ + +

*Sundays and Seasons v.20220805.1416*

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### Calendar for March 10 - 17

March 10	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
		9:30 am	Choir practice
		10:00 am	Worship, Fourth Sunday in Lent
13	Wed.	7:00 pm	Choir practice
16	Sat.	9:00 am	Spring Yard Workday
17	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
		9:30 am	Choir practice
		10:00 am	Worship, Fifth Sunday in Lent

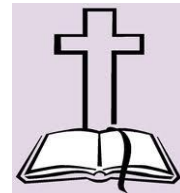
### Next Sunday's Readings, Fifth Sunday in Lent:

[Numbers 21:4-9](#)

[Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22](#)

[Ephesians 2:1-10](#)

[John 3:14-21](#)



**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, Martin Guttenplan, Vicki Guttenplan, Ron Hartung, Rudy Hehn, Susan Hehn, Colleen Holdcraft, Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Sandy Ness, Dave Suhrweir, Cassandra White

**SERVING TODAY AND ONE WEEK FROM TODAY**

<b>Serving</b>	<b>March 10</b>	<b>March 17</b>
<b>Assisting Minister</b>	Jennifer Dritt	Beth Alexander
<b>Cup Minister</b>	Rita Ford	Susan Warren
<b>Cantor</b>	Pastor Tom	Mark Canning
<b>Lector</b>	Margaret Scavone	Elliot Reece
<b>Acolyte</b>	Cup Minister - or Colton Allen or Graham Reece	
<b>Tech Team</b>	Colin Hackley Audrey Post	Sandy Lamb-Daniels Audrey Post
<b>Ushers</b>		
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Lawana Lamb-Daniels Sandy Lamb-Daniels	Audrey Post Billie Reardon
<b>Counters</b>	Patricia Handschy Rob Schiffer	Janet Barber Susan Warren

## PRAYER REQUESTS

***New concerns:*** Sue Berent (sister of Sharon Simmons) for comfort and peace at end of life; Family and friends of Don Dowd, as we mourn his passing; Bob Eshleman, recovering from heart surgery; Gladys Kane for continued healing.

***For the sick:*** Margarete Decker (mother of Caroline Collins); Sallie Robinson (wife of Erik Robinson); Don Dowd; Isabelle Taylor (granddaughter of Bill & Connie Taylor), being treated for rheumatoid arthritis and Primary Immunodeficiency; Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Dan Graney (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White); Laura McDuffie (sister of Rob Schiffer), diagnosed with primary immunodeficiency and Sjogren's syndrome.

***In treatment for cancer:*** Phil Williams; Gordon Fleischer; Stephanie Barber; Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; James Sablan (brother of Donna Schiffer); Bruce Blubaum (cousin of Sharon Simmons); Craig Timm (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Laura Ketchum-Jahn, (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Aubrey Thonvold (Reconciling Works Exec. Dir.); Judy Renwick (friend of Judi Duffy); Gil Johnson (friend of Judi Duffy); Amanda George (daughter-in-law of Rob Schiffer).

***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; for rest and rejuvenation for Presiding Bishop Eaton as she takes a leave of absence for several months; Interim Presiding Bishop Michael Burk, providing leadership in Bp. Eaton's absence; 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

**OWLS GATHERING:** This Tuesday at 11:30 a.m., the OWLs will be lunching at Little Italy. Contact Margaret if you have any questions: [ambowersfl@gmail.com](mailto:ambowersfl@gmail.com).

**SPRING WORK DAY:** Along with spring flowers come spring weeds, and our weeds demand attention. So Building & Grounds Coordinator Sandy Lamb-Daniels is inviting us to a weed-removal session at church. Write it on your calendar: 9 a.m. Saturday, March 16. She'll provide Gatorade, water, *maybe* even doughnuts. She invites us to show up at 9 with hats, gloves, bug spray (just in case) and any weed-removal tools we might have. Pray for good weeding weather.

**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>.