

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Fifth Sunday in Lent



SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 2023

10 A.M.

INTRODUCTION

In today's gospel Jesus reveals his power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead. The prophet Ezekiel prophesies God breathing new life into dry bones. To those in exile or living in the shadows of death, these stories proclaim God's promise of resurrection. In baptism we die with Christ that we might also be raised with him to new life. At the Easter Vigil we will welcome the newly baptized as we remember God's unfailing promise in our baptism.

PRELUDE

The assembly stands.



+ GATHERING +

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who journeys with us these forty days, and sustains us with the gift of grace.

Congregation (C) Amen.

P Let us acknowledge before God and one another our need for repentance and God's mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Holy God,

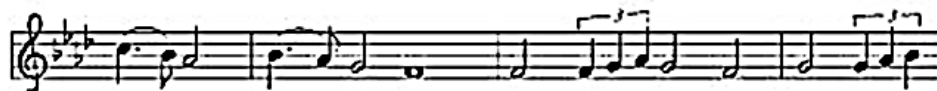
C we confess to you our faults and failings. Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word; we take for ourselves instead of giving to others; we spoil rather than steward your creation; we cause hurt though you call us to heal; we choose fear over compassion. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, as we seek to follow in your way of life. Amen.

P Hear the good news: God so loved the world that God gave the only Son, so that all may receive life. This promise is for you! God embraces you with divine mercy, ☩ forgives you in Christ's name, and revives you in the Spirit's power.

C Amen.



1 Through the night of doubt and sor - row, on - ward
 2 One the light of God's own pres - ence on the
 3 One the strain that lips of thou - sands lift as
 4 On - ward, there - fore, sis - ters, broth - ers; on - ward,



goes the pil - grim band, sing - ing songs of ex - pec -
 ran - somed peo - ple shed, chas - ing far the gloom and
 from the heart of one; one the con - flict, one the
 with the cross our aid. Bear its shame, and fight its



ta - tion, march - ing to the prom - ised land. Clear be -
 ter - ror, bright - ning all the path we tread. One the
 per - il, one the march in God he - gun. One the
 bat - tle till we rest be - neath its shade. Soon shall



fore us through the dark - ness gleams and burns the
 ob - ject of our jour - ney, one the faith which
 glad - ness of re - joice - ing on the far c -
 come the great a - wak - 'ning; soon the rend - ing



guid - ing light; pil - grim clasps the hand of
 nev - er tires, one the ear - nest look - ing
 ter - nal shore, where the one al - might - y
 of the tomb! Then the scat - t'ring of all



pil - grim step - ping fear - less through the night.
 for - ward, one the hope our God in - spires.
 Fa - ther reigns in love for - ev - er - more.
 shad - ows, and the end of toil and gloom.

GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion
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.

Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death.
Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ
and serve you in righteousness all our days, 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 SERMON *Noisy offering*



+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a promise that Israel as a nation, though dead in exile, will live again in their land through God's life-giving spirit. Three times Israel is assured that through this vision they will know that "I am the LORD."

¹The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

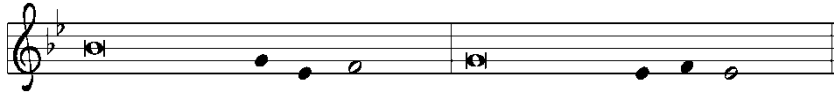
⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD."

Reader The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 130 *We sing the psalm responsively.*



Leader 1 Out 1 of the depths

I cry to 1 you, O LORD;

C 2 O LORD, 1 hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my 1 supplication.

L 3 If you were to keep watch 1 over sins,

O LORD, 1 who could stand?

C 4 Yet with you 1 is forgiveness,

in order that you 1 may be feared.

L 5 I wait for you, O LORD; 1 my soul waits;

in your word 1 is my hope.

C 6 My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch 1 for the morning,

more than those who keep watch 1 for the morning.

L 7 O Israel, wait for the LORD, for with the LORD there is 1 steadfast love;

with the LORD there is plen- 1 teous redemption.

C 8 For the LORD shall 1 redeem Israel

from 1 all their sins.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

C Amen.

SECOND READING: Romans 8:6-11

For Paul, Christian spirituality entails living in the reality of the Holy Spirit. The driving force behind our actions and values is not our sinful desire for self-satisfaction but the very Spirit by which God raised Jesus from the dead and will also raise us from the dead.

¶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ¶For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, ¶and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

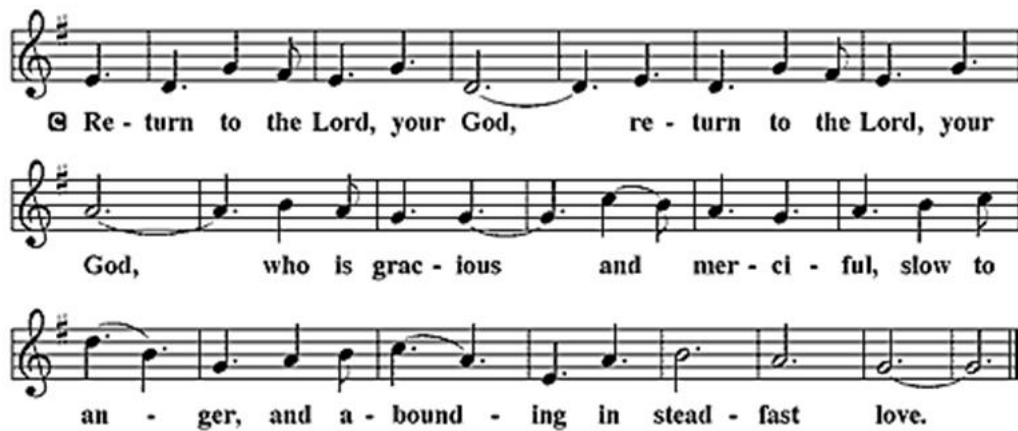
¶But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¶But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¶If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

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 11:1-45**

Jesus is moved to sorrow when his friend Lazarus falls ill and dies. Then, in a dramatic scene, he calls his friend out of the tomb and restores him to life.

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

C Glory to you, O Lord.

¹Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.
²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” ⁴But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” ⁸The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?”
⁹Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.” ¹¹After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” ¹²The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.” ¹³Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” ¹⁶Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” ²³Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”
²⁴Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”
²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

²⁸When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” ²⁹And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly

disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

⁴⁵Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

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.

Refrain - All



Je - sus is a rock in a wea - ry land, a wea - ry land, a




wea - ry land; my Je - sus is a rock in a




wea - ry land, a shel - ter in the time of storm.

Leader or All




1 No one can do like Je - sus, not a
2 When Je - sus was on earth, the
3 Yon - der comes my Sav - ior, him



mum - bling word he said; he went walk - ing down to Laz -
flesh was ver - y weak; .. he took a towel and gird -
whom I love so well; .. he has the palm of vic -

Refrain



- a - rus' grave, and he raised him from the dead.
ed him - self and he washed his dis - ci - ples' feet.
- to - ry and the keys of death and hell.

Text: African American spiritual
Music: WEARY LAND, African American spiritual

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: Merciful God,

Congregational response: receive our prayer.

PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

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

The assembly is seated.



OFFERING

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

ANTHEM *"Bring Us Home"* - 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.

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.

Bring us home, bring us home,
From darkness of night, bring us home!
Bring us home, bring us home,
Come bathe us in light, bring us home!

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.

Bring us home, bring us home,
To Love's sacrifice, bring us home!
Bring us home, bring us home,
Where grace will suffice, bring us home!

OFFERING HYMN

We stand and sing the offering hymn as the collection and the gifts are brought forward.



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.

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.

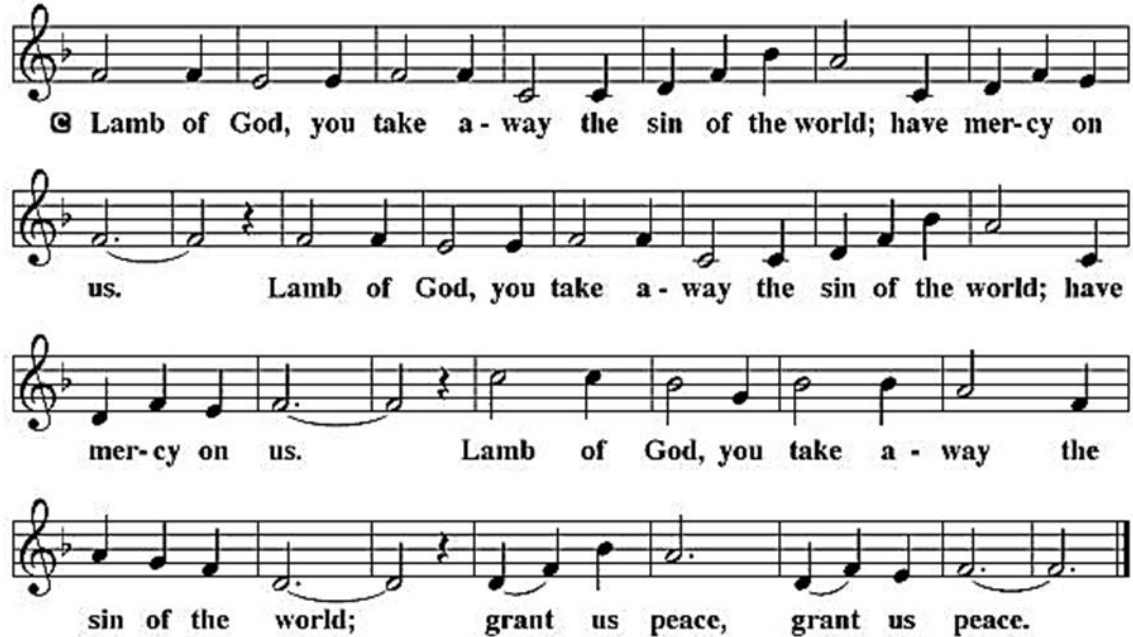
C **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.

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 ministers offer both the common cup (wine) and 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.

COMMUNION HYMNS:

- 485 *I Am the Bread of Life*
- 330 *Seed That in Earth Is Dying*
- 334 *Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery (add verse for Lent 5)*

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Let us pray.

Embodied God, at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love.

C Amen.

+ SENDING +

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

P God, the giver of love, ✠ Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly stands.

SENDING HYMN

886 *Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*

1 Oh, for a thou - sand tongues to sing my great Re-deem - er's praise,
 2 My gra - cious Mas - ter and my God, as - sist me to pro - claim,
 3 The name of Je - sus charms our fears and bids our sor - rows cease,
 4 He speaks, and lis - t'ning to his voice, new life the dead re - ceive;

the glo - ries of my God and king, the tri - umphs of his grace!
 to spread through all the earth a - broad the hon - ors of your name.
 sings mu - sic in the sin - ner's ears, brings life and health and peace.
 the mourn - ful, bro - ken hearts re - joice, the hum - ble poor be - lieve.

5 Look unto him, your Savior own,
 O fallen human race!
 Look and be saved through faith alone,
 be justified by grace!

6 To God all glory, praise, and love
 be now and ever giv'n
 by saints below and saints above,
 the church in earth and heav'n.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.
 Music: AZMON, Carl G. Gläser, 1784–1829; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

DISMISSAL

P 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.

P Go in peace. Serve in love.

C Thanks be to God.

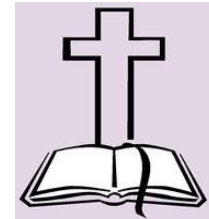
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Calendar for March 26 - April 2

March 26	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
		9:30 am	Choir practice
		10:00 am	Worship, Fifth Sunday in Lent
29	Wed.	7:00 pm	Choir practice
April 2	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
		9:30 am	Choir practice
		10:00 am	Worship, Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday

Next Sunday's Readings, Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday:

- [Isaiah 50:4-9a](#)
- [Psalms 31:9-16](#)
- [Philippians 2:5-11](#)
- [Matthew 26:14--27:66](#)



SERVING TABLE

Serving	March 26	April 2
Presiding	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom
Preaching	Pastor Tom	Pastor
Assisting Minister	Colleen Holdcraft	Rob Schiffer
Cup Minister	Rita Ford	Audrey Post
Lector	Jonas Holdcraft	Jennifer Buchanan
Altar Guild	Audrey Post Billie Reardon	Caroline Collins Andrea Notley
Counters	Audrey Post Billie Reardon	Margaret Bowers Patricia Handschy
Announcements	Denise Bookwalter	Denise Bookwalter

PRAYER REQUESTS

New concerns: Judy Kent (mother of Mike Martinez), in hospice care; Angela Locke (friend of Audrey Post), for patience and strength; Becky Button (cousin of Audrey Post), as she continues to recuperate from a horrific golf cart-truck crash; Isaac (son of Terri Schmitt), for physical and emotional healing.

For the sick: Val Sullivan; Margarete Decker (mother of Caroline Collins); 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).

In treatment for cancer: Gordon Fleischer; Stephanie Barber; Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; Maggie Soff (friend of Sandy Sampson); James Sablan (brother of Donna Schiffer); Bruce Blubaum (cousin of Sharon Simmons); Chris Dickman (synod council member); Craig Timm (friend of Cheryl & Steve).

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.

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; Bishop Elizabeth Eaton; 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

FLOWER CHART FOR 2023: 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 2023 Flower Chart located in the narthex. The cost is \$35, 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>.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR HOLY WEEK

Sunday, March 25, 10 a.m.: Passion/Palm Sunday:

- Procession with Palms
- Dramatic Reading of the Passion
- Holy Communion
- Darkened sanctuary to symbolize Holy Week's beginning

Thursday, March 29: Maundy Thursday, 7 p.m.:

- Holy Communion
- Stripping of the Altar
- Darkened Sanctuary

Good Friday, March 30, 7 p.m.:

- Adoration of the Cross
- Simple Liturgy
- Instrumentals
- Darkened Sanctuary to Symbolize Holy Week's Beginning



Easter Sunday, April 1:

8:45 - 9:15 a.m. - Easter Breakfast followed by an Easter Egg Hunt

10 a.m.:

- Festival Worship
- Holy Communion
- Instrumentals



EASTER LILIES

We'll be using Easter lilies to adorn our chancel area for Easter. Would you like to dedicate one or more? The cost is \$10 each, and we'll have the dedication list in the Easter bulletin.

Fill out the form below and place it with your check in the offering plate and be sure to designate that it is for the Easter Lilies. The deadline is Sun., April 2.

Easter Lily Dedication

Name _____

How many _____

Dedication:
