

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixth Sunday of Easter



SUNDAY, MAY 14, 2023

10 A.M.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus does not abandon his followers. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus comes to abide with his disciples of every generation. As Pentecost draws near, we are reminded that the risen Christ dwells in us as the Spirit of truth. We receive this Spirit in baptism and pray that in our gathering around the Lord's table the Spirit will transform us to be the body of the risen Christ in the world.

PRELUDE

The assembly stands.



+ GATHERING +

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, by whose hand we are given new birth, by whose speaking we are given new life.

Congregation (C) Amen.

P Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are welcomed, restored, and supported as citizens of the new creation. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life, you are the everlasting wellspring. In mercy and might you have freed us from death and raised us with Jesus, the firstborn of the dead. In baptismal waters our old life is washed away, and in them we are born anew.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams. Honor to you for waters that wash us clean, quench our thirst, and nurture both crops and creatures. Praise to you for the life-giving water of baptism, the outpouring of the Spirit of the new creation.

C Wash away our sin and all that separates us from you. Empower our witness to your resurrection. Strengthen our resolve in seeking justice for all.

P Satisfy the world's need through this living water. Where drought dries the earth, bring refreshment. Where despair prevails, grant hope. Where chaos reigns, bring peace. We ask this through Christ, who with you and the Spirit reigns forever.

C Amen.

GATHERING HYMN 631 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heav'n, to
2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - 'ry
3 Come, Al - might - y, to de - liv - er; let us all thy
4 Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion, pure and spot - less

earth come down! Fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy
trou - bled breast; let us all in thee in - her - it; let us
life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er -
let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect -

faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion,
find thy prom - ised rest. Take a - way the love of sin - ning;
more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be ul - ways bless - ing,
ly re - stored in thee! Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry,

pure, un - bound - ed love thou art: vis - it us with
 Al - pha and O - me - ga he; end of faith, as
 serve thee as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee
 till in heav'n we take our place, till we cast our

thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.
 its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
 with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
 crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise!

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
 Music: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard, 1811-1887

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.

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. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb



who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and



strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

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 and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and 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



Acts 17:22-31

In Athens, Paul faces the challenge of proclaiming the gospel to Greeks who know nothing of either Jewish or Christian tradition. He proclaims that the “unknown god” whom they worship is the true Lord of heaven and earth who will judge the world with justice through Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead.

²²Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. ²³For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’

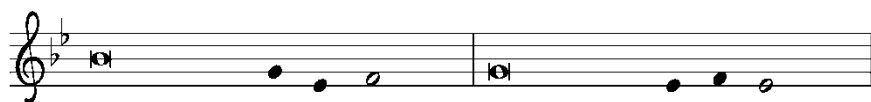
²⁹Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. ³⁰While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Reader The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 66:8-20

We sing the psalm in response to the first reading.



Leader ⁸Bless our | God, you peoples;
let the sound of | praise be heard.

C ⁹**Our God has kept us a- | mong the living
and has not allowed our | feet to slip.**

L ¹⁰For you, O God, have | tested us;
you have tried us just as sil- | ver is tried.

C ¹¹**You brought us in- | to the net;
you laid heavy burdens up- | on our backs.**

L ¹²You let people ride over our heads; we went through | fire and water,
but you brought us out into a place | of refreshment.

C ¹³**I will enter your house | with burnt offerings
and will pay | you my vows—**

L ¹⁴those that I promised | with my lips
and spoke with my mouth when I | was in trouble.

C ¹⁵**I will offer you burnt offerings of fatlings with the | smoke of rams;
I will give you ox- | en and goats.**

L ¹⁶Come and listen, all you | who believe,
and I will tell you what God has | done for me.

C ¹⁷**I called out to God | with my mouth,
and praised the Lord | with my tongue.**

L ¹⁸If I had cherished evil | in my heart,
the Lord would | not have heard me;

C ¹⁹**but in truth | God has heard me
and has attended to the sound | of my prayer.**

L ²⁰Blessed be God, who has not reject- | ed my prayer,
nor withheld unfailing | love from me.

Spoken after the Psalm is sung:

C **Amen.**

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 3:13-22

The author of 1 Peter encourages Christians to remain faithful even in the face of defamation and persecution. In baptism we are made clean to act in accordance with what is right.

¹³Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, ¹⁵but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; ¹⁶yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

R The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

GOSPEL: John 14:15-21

In final words to his disciples on the night of his arrest, Jesus encourages obedience to his commandments and speaks of the Spirit, who will be with them forever.

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

C Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

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 735 *Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth*



1 Moth - er - ing God, you gave me birth in the bright
2 Moth - er - ing Christ, you took my form, of - fer - ing
3 Moth - er - ing Spir - it, nur - t'ring one, in arms of



morn - ing of this world. Cre - a - tor, source of ev - 'ry
me your food of light, grain . . . of life, and grape of
pa - tience hold me close, so that in faith I root and



breath, you are my rain, my wind, my sun.
love, your ver - y bod - y for my peace.
grow un - til I flow'r, un - til I know.

Text: Jean Janzen, b. 1933; based on Julian of Norwich, c. 1342–c. 1413
Music: NORWICH, Carolyn Jennings, b. 1936
Text © 1991 Jean Janzen, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
Music © 1995 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

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

The people greet one another with the sign of Christ's peace.

The assembly stands.



+ MEAL +

OFFERING

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

ANTHEM *“Love One Another”* - Bell

(Refrain)

Love one another for love is of God.

Those who live in love, live in God,

And God lives in them.

Those who show love are the children of God;

Father and mother is God to each of them. (Refrain)

God showed his love in the face of the Son;

Christ lives in us so that we might live through him. (Refrain)

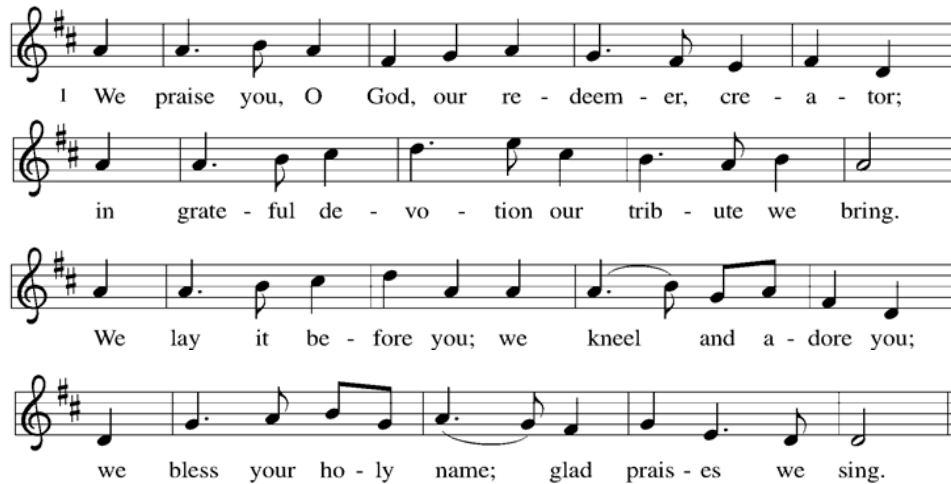
Love has no place for the menace of fear;

Fear is abandoned where love is found. (Refrain)

OFFERING HYMN **ELW 870** (*vs. 1*)

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

We Praise You, O God



I We praise you, O God, our re - deem - er, cre - a - tor;
in grate - ful de - vo - tion our trib - ute we bring.
We lay it be - fore you; we kneel and a - dore you;
we bless your ho - ly name; glad prais - es we sing.

Text: Julia C. Cory, 1882–1963
Music: KREMSER, A. Valerius, *Nederlandsch Gedenckclanck*, 1626

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, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. 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.

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.

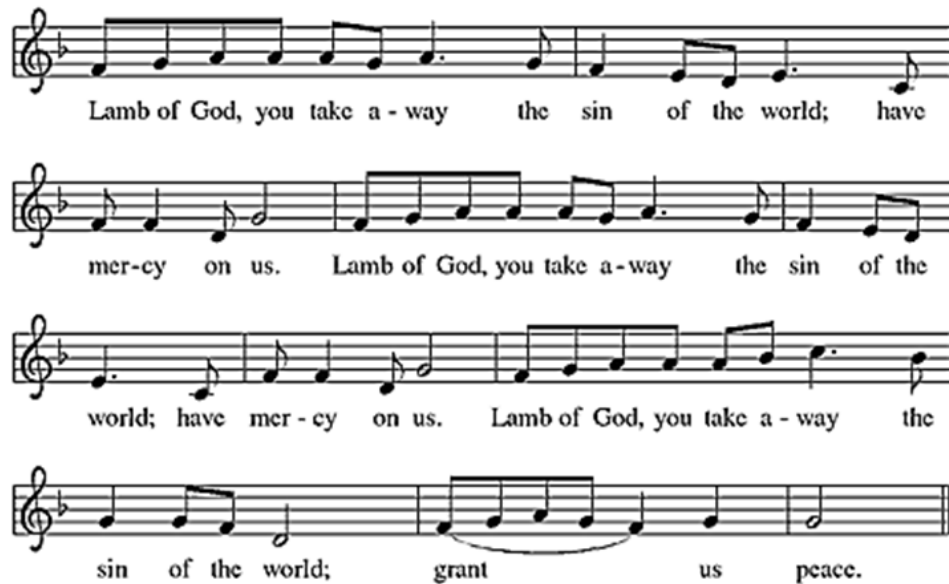
C Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Come and know Christ, broken and poured out for you.

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.

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	613	<i>Thy Holy Wings</i>
	397	<i>Loving Spirit</i>
	804	<i>Come Down, O Love Divine</i>

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

Gracious God, in you we live and move and have our being. With your word and this meal of grace, you have nourished our life together. Strengthen us to show your love and serve the world in Jesus' name.

C Amen.

+ SENDING +

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

P The God of all, who raised ☩ Jesus from the dead, bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit to live in the new creation.

C Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



1 "Go, my chil - dren, with my bless-ing, nev - er a - lone.
 2 "Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure.
 3 "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, clos - er to me.



Wak - ing, sleep - ing, I am with you, you are my own.
 Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
 Grow in love and love by serv-ing, joy - ful and free.



In my love's bap-tis - mal riv - er I have made you mine for - ev - er.
 Here you heard my dear Son's sto - ry, here you touched him, saw his glo - ry.
 Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here my ten - der com-fort stilled you.



Go, my chil - dren, with my bless-ing, you are my own."
 Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure."
 Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, joy - ful and free."

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, b. 1919, alt.
 Music: AR HYD Y NOS, Welsh traditional
 Text © 1983 Concordia Publishing House

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. Serve the Risen One.
- C Thanks be to God!**

+ + +



**THIS WEEK'S ALTAR FLOWERS ARE DEDICATED TO
THE TO THE GLORY OF GOD.**

Calendar for May 14 - 21

May	14	Sun.	9:00 am	Tea Party
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10:00 am	Worship, Sixth Sunday of Easter
	21	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10:00 am	Worship, Seventh Sunday of Easter

Next Sunday, Seventh Sunday of Easter:

[Acts 1:6-14](#)

[Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35](#)

[1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11](#)

[John 17:1-11](#)



SERVING TABLE		
Serving	May 14	May 21
Presiding	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom
Preaching	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom
Assisting Minister	Rob Schiffer	Audrey Post
Cup Minister	Rita Ford	
Lector	Violet Greeley	Jennifer Buchanan
Altar Guild	Rita Ford Susan Warren	Linda Eshleman Barbara Sullivan
Counters	Janet Barber Susan Warren	Kirsten Ebbesen Rob Schiffer
Announcements	Denise Bookwalter	Denise Bookwalter

PRAYER REQUESTS

New concerns: Our shared sympathy on the death of Carol Dunn (friend of Cheryl and longtime organizer and member of Reconciling Works); Kevin Robinson (son of Erik Robinson), in need of encouragement; Angela Locke (friend of Audrey Post), for patience and strength; Becky Button (cousin of Audrey Post), as she continues to recuperate; Isaac (son of Terri Schmitt), for physical and emotional healing.

For the sick: Val Sullivan; Audrey Post; 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).

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

BASIC CPR AND AED TRAINING: On Sunday, May 21, 11:30 a.m. in our Fellowship hall, we have an AED - Automated External Defibrillator. It can revive a person from sudden cardiac arrest, if someone knows how to use it. So we're going to learn how from Dr. Rudy Hehn, St. Stephen member and longtime physician/teacher. All members, visitors and guests are invited. Snack and lunch provided. RSVP to sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com or call 850-385-2728.

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>.