

# ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost



SUNDAY, JULY 30, 2023

10 A.M.

*We welcome Olivia Ahyoung, guest musician.*

## INTRODUCTION

*As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!*

## PRELUDE

*The assembly stands.*



+ GATHERING +

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who greets us in this and every season, whose word never fails, whose promise is sure.

**Congregation (C) Amen.**

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of our neighbors.  
Merciful God,

**C we confess that we have sinned. We have hurt our community. We have squandered your blessings. We have hoarded your bounty. In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant us your mercy.**

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P Righteous God,

**C we confess that we have sinned. We have failed to be honest. We have lacked the courage to speak. We have spoken falsely. In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant us your mercy.**

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P God is a cup of cold water when we thirst. God offers boundless grace when we fail. Claim the gift of God's mercy: you are freed and forgiven in the name of ✚ Jesus Christ.

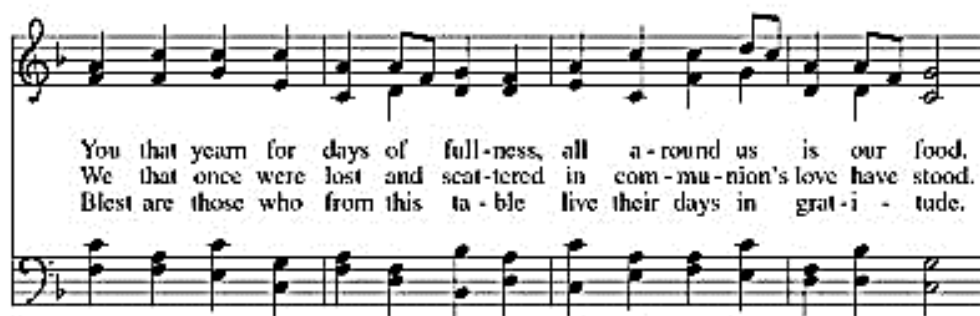
**C Amen.**



1 All who hun-ger, gath-er glad-ly; ho-ly man-na is our bread.  
 2 All who hun-ger, nev-er strang-ers; seek-er, be a wel-come guest.  
 3 All who hun-ger, sing to- geth-er, Je- sus Christ is liv- ing bread.



Come from wil-der-ness and wan-d'ring, Here in truth we will be fed,  
 Come from rest-less-ness and roam-ing, Here in joy we keep the feast.  
 Come from lone-li-ness and long-ing, Here in peace we have been fed.



You that yearn for days of full-ness, all a-round us is our food,  
 We that once were lost and scat-tered in com-mu-nion's love have stood.  
 Blest are those who from this ta-ble live their days in grat-i-tude.



Taste and see the grace e-ter-nal. Taste and see that God is good.  
 Taste and see the grace e-ter-nal. Taste and see that God is good.  
 Taste and see the grace e-ter-nal. Taste and see that God is good.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993

Music: HOLY MANNA, W. Moore, *Colwyn Hill Hymns*, 1825; arr. hymnal version

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## 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.

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C** Amen.

*The assembly is seated.*

## CHILDREN'S TIME



+ WORD +

### FIRST READING: 1 Kings 3:5-12

*Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.*

<sup>5</sup>At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." <sup>6</sup>And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. <sup>7</sup>And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>8</sup>And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. <sup>9</sup>Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

<sup>10</sup>It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. <sup>11</sup>God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, <sup>12</sup>I now do

according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you.”

Reader     The Word of the Lord.

**C           Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: 119:129-136** *We sing the psalm in response to the first reading.*



Leader <sup>129</sup>Your de- | crees are wonderful;  
                  therefore I obey them with | all my heart.

**C           <sup>130</sup>When your word is opened | it gives light;  
                  it gives understanding | to the simple.**

L           <sup>131</sup>I open my | mouth and pant  
                  because I long for | your commandments.

**C           <sup>132</sup>Turn to me and be gra- | cious to me,  
                  as you always do to those who | love your name.**

L           <sup>133</sup>Order my footsteps | in your word;  
                  let no iniquity have dominion | over me.

**C           <sup>134</sup>Rescue me from those | who oppress me,  
                  and I will keep | your commandments.**

L           <sup>135</sup>Let your face shine up- | on your servant  
                  and teach | me your statutes.

**C           <sup>136</sup>My eyes shed | streams of tears,  
                  because people do not | keep your teaching.**

*Spoken after the Psalm is sung:*

**C           Amen.**

## **SECOND READING: Romans 8:26-39**

*These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.*

<sup>26</sup>The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. <sup>27</sup>And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

<sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. <sup>30</sup>And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

<sup>31</sup>What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

<sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**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: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

*Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.*

**P** The holy gospel according to Matthew, the thirteenth chapter.

**C** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>31</sup>[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;<sup>32</sup>it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

<sup>33</sup>He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

<sup>44</sup>"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

<sup>45</sup>"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; <sup>46</sup>on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

<sup>47</sup>"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; <sup>48</sup>when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. <sup>49</sup>So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous <sup>50</sup>and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>51</sup>“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” <sup>52</sup>And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

**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**      **793**      *Be Thou My Vision*



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;  
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;  
3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,  
4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord,  
thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:  
may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,  
Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,  
thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,  
Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.  
great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.  
still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860–1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880–1931  
Music: SLANE, Irish traditional

## **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

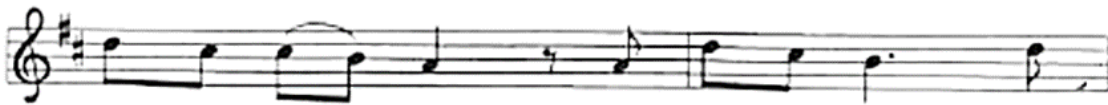
*An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.*

OFFERING HYMNELW 690      *We Raise Our Hands to You, O Lord (vs. 1 & 2)*

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



1	We	raise	our hands to	you, O Lord,	like
2	What	good	and bless - ing	you be - stow	are
3	Oh,	make	our bar - ren	trees to grow,	our
4	As	sum - mer	fol - lows	spring-time's rain,	grace
5	Through	grace	your new cre - a - tion	lies	in



emp - ty	ves - sels.	Oh, come to us	and
free - ly	giv - en.	Your pow'r will make	the
hands to	blos - som,	and let our lives	bring
fol - lows	sor - row,	and grief and joy	shall
hands held	o - pen.	O Giv - er of	all



give us life	from springs where liv - ing wa - ters flow.
weak - est strong	and bar - ren branch - es start to bud.
forth such fruit	that heals our neigh - bor's grief and pain.
bear much fruit,	though hid - den from our hu - man eyes.
good - ness, come,	dwelt with us in our earth - ly home.

Text: Svein Ellingsen, b. 1929; tr. Hedwig T. Durnbaugh, b. 1929  
 Music: Trond Kverno, b. 1945  
 Tr. © Hedwig T. Durnbaugh  
 Music © 1978 Norsk Musik forlag

VI RENKER VÅRE HENDER FREM  
 ■■■■

## 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 reveal your glory as the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, one Lord, one God, ever to be adored in your eternal glory. 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'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 All people are called to Christ's table. Come, eat what is good.

*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 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>479</b>	<i>We Come to the Hungry Feast</i>
	<b>674</b>	<i>Let Us Talents and Tongue Employ</i>
	<b>759</b>	<i>My Faith Looks Up to Thee</i>

*The assembly stands.*



## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

We thank you, generous God, for the refreshment we have received at your banquet table. Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world, through the one who is our dearest treasure, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

## + SENDING +

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

P The God who calls across the cosmos and speaks in the smallest seed ✝ bless, keep, and sustain you now and to the end of the age.

C Amen.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SENDING HYMN**      **705**    *God of Grace and God of Glory*

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple  
 2 Lo! The hosts of e - vil round us scorn the Christ, as -  
 3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to  
 4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour your pow'r; crown your an - cient chur - ch's sto - ry;  
 sail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us  
 your con - trol; shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness,  
 we de - plore; let the gift of your sal - va - tion

bring its bud to glo - rious flow'r. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age  
 free our hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age  
 rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour,  
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days,  
 lest we miss your king - dom's goal, lest we miss your king - dom's goal,  
 serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore,

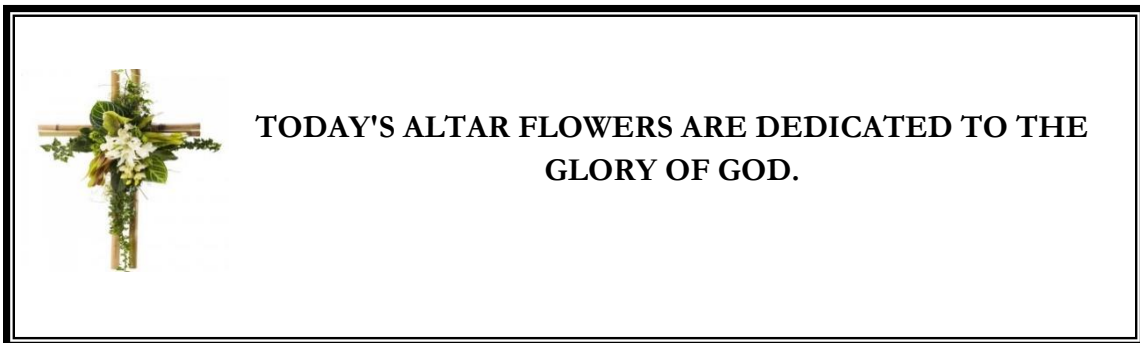
Text: Harry E. Fosdick, 1878-1969  
 Music: CWM RHONDDA, John Hughes, 1873-1932

**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. Go in peace. Share the harvest.
- C Thanks be to God!**

+ + +

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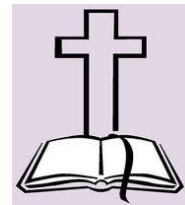


**Calendar for July 30 - August 6**

July	30	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			10:00 am	Worship, Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
			11:30 am	Congregational meeting—open forum
Aug.	6	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			10:00 am	Worship, Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

**Next Sunday, Tenth Sunday after Pentecost:**

- [Isaiah 55:1-5](#)
- [Psalms 145:8-9, 14-21](#)
- [Romans 9:1-5](#)
- [Matthew 14:13-21](#)



<b>SERVING TABLE</b>		
<b>Serving</b>	<b>July 30</b>	<b>August 6</b>
<b>Presiding</b>	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom
<b>Preaching</b>	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom
<b>Assisting Minister</b>	Colleen Holdcraft	Beth Alexander
<b>Cup Minister</b>	Kirsten Ebbesen	Rob Schiffer
<b>Cantor</b>	Rudy Hehn	Kirsten Ebbesen
<b>Lector</b>	Mark Bertolami	Jennifer Dritt
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Beth Alexander Judi Duffy	
<b>Counters</b>	Audrey post Billie Reardon	Debee Meyer Susan Warren
<b>Announcements</b>	Denise Bookwalter	Denise Bookwalter

### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

***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; 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.

**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>.