

# ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost



**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2023**

**10 A.M.**

## INTRODUCTION

*Today the prophet Amos calls for justice to roll down like waters. Paul urges us to encourage one another with the promised coming of the Lord. Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids. Surrounded by the faithful of every time and place, we celebrate Christ's coming in our midst in the word of life and the feast of victory—the marriage feast of the lamb.*

## PRELUDE

*The assembly stands.*



+ GATHERING +

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*All make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved.

**Congregation (C) Amen.**

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P Holy One,

**C we confess that we are not awake for you. We are not faithful in using your gifts. We forget the least of our siblings. We do not see your beautiful image in one another. We are infected by sin that divides your beloved community. Open our hearts to your coming, open our eyes to see you in our neighbor, open our hands to serve your creation. Amen.**

P Beloved, we are God's children, and Jesus, our Beloved, opens the door to us. Through ✚ Jesus you are forgiven, by Jesus you are welcome, in Jesus you are called to rejoice! Let us live in the promises prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

**C Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

1 When long be - fore time and the worlds were be - gun,  
 2 The si - lence was bro - ken when God sang the Song,  
 3 The sounds of the crea - tures were one with their Lord's,  
 4 Though down through the a - ges the Song dis - ap - peared,

when there was no earth and no sky and no sun,  
 and light pierced the dark - ness and rhy - thm be - gan,  
 their har - mo - nies sweet and be - lit - ting the Word;  
 its har - mo - nies bro - ken and al - most un - heard,

and all was deep si - lence and night reigned su - preme,  
 and with its first birth - cries cre - a - tion was born,  
 the Sing - er was pleased as the earth sang the Song,  
 the Sing - er comes to us to sing it a - gain,

and e - ven our Mak - er had on - ly a dream—  
 and crea - ture - ly voi - ces sang praise to the morn.  
 the choir of the crea - tures re - ech - oed it long.  
 our God - is - with - us in the world now as then.

Text: Peter W. A. Davison, b. 1936

Music: THE SINGER AND THE SONG, Peter W. A. Davison, b. 1936; arr. George Black, 1931-2003

Text and tune © Peter W. A. Davison, admit. Augsburg Fortress.

Arr. © Estate of George Black.

## GREETING

B The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

## HYMN OF PRAISE

*Refrain*



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.

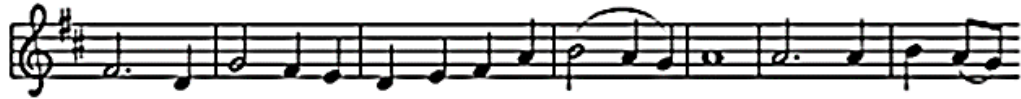


*Refrain*

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.

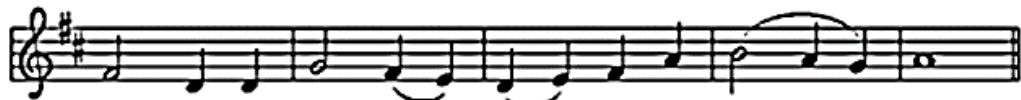


*Refrain*

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

**B** Let us pray.

O God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C** Amen.

*The assembly is seated.*

## CHILDREN'S TIME



+ WORD +

### FIRST READING: Amos 5:18-24

*In the days of Amos, people thought that the day of the LORD would be a time of great victory, but Amos announced that it would be a day of darkness, not light. He said liturgy is no substitute for obedience. The LORD demands justice and righteousness in the community.*

<sup>18</sup>Alas for you who desire the day of the LORD! Why do you want the day of the LORD? It is darkness, not light; <sup>19</sup>as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake. <sup>20</sup>Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

<sup>21</sup>I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. <sup>22</sup>Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. <sup>23</sup>Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. <sup>24</sup>But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**PSALM: Psalm 70** *We sing the psalm in response to the first reading.*



Leader <sup>1</sup>Be pleased, O God, to de-<sup>1</sup> liver me;  
O LORD, make <sup>1</sup> haste to help me.

**C** <sup>2</sup>Let those who seek my life be put to shame <sup>1</sup> and confounded;  
let those who take pleasure in my misfortune draw back and <sup>1</sup> be  
disgraced.

L <sup>3</sup>Let those who say to me “Aha!” and gloat <sup>1</sup> over me  
turn back because <sup>1</sup> of their shame.

**C** <sup>4</sup>Let all who seek you rejoice and be <sup>1</sup> glad in you;  
let those who love your salvation say forever, “Great <sup>1</sup> is the LORD!”

L <sup>5</sup>But as for me, I am poor and needy; come to me quick-<sup>1</sup> ly, O God.  
You are my helper and my deliverer; O LORD, <sup>1</sup> do not tarry.

*Spoken after the Psalm is sung:*

**C** **Amen.**

## **SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

*Some of the Thessalonians are worried that dead Christians will be excluded from the resurrection to eternal life when Christ comes again. Paul reassures them with the word of hope that all Christians, living or dead, will be raised into everlasting life with Christ.*

<sup>13</sup>We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup>For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. <sup>15</sup>For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

<sup>17</sup>Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup>Therefore encourage one another with these words.

*Spoken after the Psalm is sung:*

**C Amen.**

*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 25:1-13

*Jesus tells a parable about his own second coming, emphasizing the need for readiness at all times.*

P The holy gospel according to Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.

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

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup>Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup>When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; <sup>4</sup>but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup>As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy



and slept. <sup>6</sup>But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' <sup>7</sup>Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup>The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' <sup>9</sup>But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' <sup>10</sup>And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup>Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' <sup>12</sup>But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' <sup>13</sup>Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

**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**      **638**      *Blessed Assurance*

1 Bless-ed as-sur-ance, Je-sus is mine! Oh, what a fore-taste of glo-ry di-vine!  
 2 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, per-fect de-light, vi-sions of rap-ture now burst on my sight;  
 3 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, all is at rest; I in my Sav-ior am hap-py and blest,

Heir of sal-va-tion, pur-chase of God, born of his Spir-it, washed in his blood,  
 an-gels de-scend-ing bring from a-bove ech-oes of mer-cy, whis-pers of love,  
 watch-ing and wait-ing, look-ing a-bove, filled with his good-ness, lost in his love.

*Refrain*

This is my sto-ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long:

this is my sto-ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long.

## **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

*"Love Is the Boat for the Journey" - Callanan*

You are the way to heaven's yielding fold.  
You are the truth bringing freedom.  
You are the life burning deep within our hearts,  
for you are the boat for the journey.

You are the stream where flows the path of life,  
guiding the way for disciples.  
Though storms may arise you calm the fear inside,  
for you are the boat for the journey.

You are our God, the living, saving Word.  
You are the banquet of justice.  
You know our pain; you lift us from our shame,  
for you are the boat for the journey.

We'll sing this song of never ending joy,  
filled with the truth of your gospel.  
With faith, hope, and love, we claim your living Word,  
for you are the boat for the journey.  
Love is the boat for the journey.

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

1 Praise and thanks-giv - ing, God, we would of - fer for all things  
 2 God, bless the la - bor we bring to serve you, that with our  
 3 Fa - ther, pro - vid - ing food for your chil - dren, by Wis - dom's  
 4 Then will your bless - ing reach ev - 'ry peo - ple, free - ly con -

liv - ing, you have made good: har - vest of sown fields, fruits of the  
 neigh - bor we may be fed. Sow - ing or till - ing, we would work  
 guid - ing teach us to share one with an - oth - er, so that, re -  
 fess - ing your gra - cious hand. Where you are reign - ing, no one will

or - chard, hay from the mown fields, blos - som and wood.  
 with you, har - vest - ing, mill - ing for dai - ly bread.  
 joic - ing with us, all oth - ers may know your care.  
 hun - ger, your love sus - tain - ing show - ers the land.

Text: Albert F. Bayly, 1901–1984, alt.  
 Music: BUNESSAN, Gaelic tune; arr. hymnal version  
 Text © Oxford University Press. All rights reserved.  
 Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

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 There is a place for you at the banquet. Come and feast at Jesus' table.

*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>785</b>	<i>When Peace Like a River</i>
	<b>494</b>	<i>For the Bread Which You Have Broken</i>
	<b>488</b>	<i>Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness</i>

*The assembly stands.*



## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, in this simple meal you have set a banquet. Sustain us on the journey, strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children, and give us glad and generous hearts as we meet you on the way.

C **Amen.**

## + SENDING +

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

B May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad! The blessing of God, Sovereign, ✝ Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always.

C **Amen.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SENDING HYMN**      439      *Soon and Very Soon*



1 Soon and ver - y soon  
2 No more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,  
3 No more dy - in' there,  
4 Soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon  
no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,  
no more dy - in' there,  
soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon  
no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,  
no more dy - in' there,  
soon and ver - y soon



Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, we're goin' to see the King!



Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu -



jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah.

Text: Andraé Crouch, b. 1945  
Music: VERY SOON, Andraé Crouch  
Text and music © 1976 Bud John Songs, Inc./Crouch Music, admin. EMI Christian Music Publishing

**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 Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
C **Thanks be to God!**

+ + +

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**The Reece Family dedicates  
today's altar flowers to the glory of God  
and in celebration of the  
family's fall birthdays.**

**Calendar for Nov. 12 - 19**

Nov.	12	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10:00 am	Worship, Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost
			11:30 am	Worship Committee meeting
	13	Mon.	11:30 am	OWLs Gathering at The Getaway
	14	Wed.	7:00 pm	Choir practice
	19	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10:00 am	Worship, Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Next Sunday, Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost:

[Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18](#)

[Psalm 90:1-8 \[9-11\] 12](#)

[1 Thessalonians 5:1-11](#)

[Matthew 25:14-30](#)



### SERVING EVERY SUNDAY

Pastor Tom, presiding and preaching

Katharine Gossman, piano

Karl Barton, flute

Denise Bookwalter, announcements

Choir: Karl Barton, Melissa Barton, 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

Serving	November 12	November 19
Assisting Minister	Rob Schiffer	Kirsten Ebbesen
Cup Minister	Susan Warren	Colleen Holdcraft
Cantor	Colleen Holdcraft	
Lector	Judi Duffy	Mark Bertolami
Acolyte	Cup Minister - or Colton Allen or Graham Reece	
Tech Team	Colleen Holdcraft Audrey Post	Colleen Holdcraft Jonas Holdcraft
Ushers	Colin Hackley Lawana Lamb-Daniels	Bob Eshleman Jan Harrison
Altar Guild	Beth Alexander	Rita Ford Susan Warren
Counters	Patricia Handschy Greta Scavone	Kirsten Ebbesen Rob Schiffer

## PRAYER REQUESTS

***New concerns:*** Family and friends of Debee Meyer, mourning her passing; Steve Michael (cousin of Rob Schiffer), in rehab after a serious accident.

***For the sick:*** Val Sullivan; 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:*** 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); Chris Dickman (synod council member); Craig Timm (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Laura Ketchum-Jahn, (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Aubrey Thonvold (Reconciling Works Exec. Dir.).

***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.

***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

**OWLS GATHERING** - The next OWLs lunch will be at The Gathering (2386 Allen Rd.) on **MONDAY**, Nov. 13 at 11:30 a.m. RSVP to Margaret at [ambowersfl@gmail.com](mailto:ambowersfl@gmail.com).

**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 \$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>.