

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2023

10 A.M.

INTRODUCTION

Our readings during November speak of the end times. Zephaniah proclaims that the coming day of the LORD will be filled with wrath and distress. Paul says it will come like a thief in the night and urges us to be awake and sober. Jesus tells the parable of the talents, calling us to use our gifts, while we still have time, for the greater and common good. In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope—word, water, bread, and wine—eager to welcome the good news of Christ's coming among us.

PRELUDE

The assembly stands.



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 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 e -
 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 seat - '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

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.



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.



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.



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.

Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME



+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

Zephaniah (like the prophet Amos in last week's first reading) presents the day of the LORD as one of judgment and wrath. Descriptions of the last day in the New Testament include details taken from Old Testament accounts of the day of the LORD.

⁷Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests.

¹²At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, "The LORD will not do good, nor will he do harm." ¹³Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.

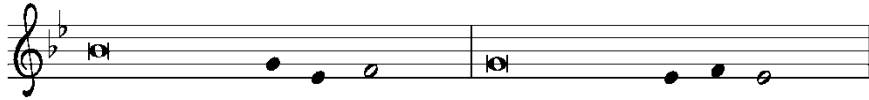
¹⁴The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there. ¹⁵That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, ¹⁶a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

¹⁷I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the LORD, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.
¹⁸Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath; in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 90:1-8 [9-11] 12 *We sing the psalm in response to the first reading.*



Leader ¹Lord, you have | been our refuge
 from one generation | to another.

**C ²Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the | earth were
 born,
 from age to age | you are God.**

L ³You turn us back to the | dust and say,
 “Turn back, O child- | ren of earth.”

**C ⁴For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when | it is past
 and like a watch | in the night;**

L ⁵you sweep them away | like a dream,
 they fade away suddenly | like the grass:

**C ⁶in the morning it is | green and flourishes;
 in the evening it is dried | up and withered.**

L ⁷For we are consumed | by your anger;
 we are afraid because | of your wrath.

**C ⁸Our iniquities you have | set before you,
 and our secret sins in the light | of your countenance.**

L ⁹When you are angry, all our | days are gone;
 we bring our years to an end | like a sigh.

C ¹⁰**The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength | even eighty;
 yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away
 quickly and | we are gone.**

L ¹¹Who regards the power | of your wrath?
 Who rightly fears your | indignation?]

C ¹²**So teach us to num- | ber our days
 that we may apply our | hearts to wisdom.**

Spoken after the Psalm is sung:

C **Amen.**

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Though we do not know and cannot calculate the day of Christ's return, we live faithfully in the here and now as we anticipate the day when we will be given eternal salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

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 25:14-30

Jesus tells a parable about his second coming, indicating that it is not sufficient merely to maintain things as they are. Those who await his return should make good use of the gifts that God has provided them.

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

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

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁴“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’

²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master. ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’

²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

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 **688** *Lord of Light (vs. 1, 2, & 4)*

1 Lord of light, your name out - shin - ing all the stars and
 2 By the toil of faith - ful work - ers in some far out -
 3 Grant that knowl - edge, still in - creas - ing, at your feet may
 4 By the prayers of faith - ful watch - ers, nev - er si - lent

suns of space, use our tal - ents in your king - dom
 ly - ing field, by the cour - age where the ra - diance
 low - ly kneel; with your grace our tri - umphs hal - low,
 day or night; by the cross of Je - sus, bring - ing

as the ser - vants of your grace; use us to ful -
 of the cross is still re - vealed, by the vic - to -
 with your char - i - ty our zeal; lift the na - tions
 peace to all and heal - ing light; by the love that

fill your pur - pose in the gift of Christ your Son.
 ries of meek - ness, through re - proach and suf - fering won:
 from the shad - ows to the glad - ness of the sun:
 pass - es knowl - edge, mak - ing all your chil - dren one:

Refrain

Fa - ther, as in high - est heav - en, so on earth your will be done.

Text: Howell E. Lewis, 1890-1957, alt.
 Music: ABBOT'S LIGHT, Cyril V. Taylor, 1907-1991
 Rev. © Union of Welsh Independents.
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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 "What You Have Done For Me" -Alonso

I am the hungry, I am the poor,
I am the stranger outside your door.
So when you feed the hungry, when you clothe the poor
I will no longer be just a stranger at your door.

(Refrain)

What you have done for the least of my children
You have done for me.
What you have given, with nothing left to give,
You have given me.

Come all you blessed, come and rejoice.
Inherit the kingdom prepared for you.
For you are my children, called to serve.
as keepers of the vision and speakers of the word.

(Refrain)

I will look to you when life on earth has ended.
Those who give will receive, those who seek will find;
so seek my face in every face
and see the eyes of God!

(Refrain)

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
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 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.

COMMUNION HYMNS	726	<i>Light Dawns on a Weary World</i>
	678	<i>God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending</i>
	679	<i>For the Fruit of All Creation</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.

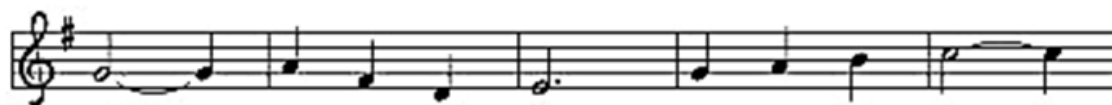
C Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING HYMN 715 *Christ, Be Our Light*



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for
2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for
3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for
4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for
5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



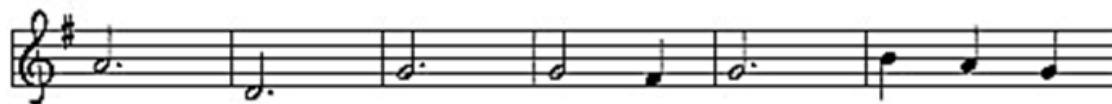
truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



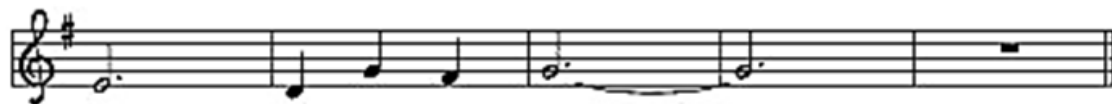
your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957
Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell
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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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**Sandy Ness dedicates today's
altar flowers to the glory of God
in thanks for her family and friends.**

Calendar for Nov. 19 - 26

Nov.	19	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10:00 am	Worship, Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost
			11:30 am	Legacy Giving Presentation from Rev. Ana Lugo With Potluck
	26	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			10:00 am	Worship, Christ the King Sunday

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 19	November 26
Assisting Minister	Kirsten Ebbesen	Beth Alexander
Cup Minister	Colleen Holdcraft	Rita Ford
Cantor	Rudy Hehn	
Lector	Ron Hartung	Karen Olson
Acolyte	Cup Minister - or Colton Allen or Graham Reece	
Tech Team	Colleen Holdcraft Audrey Post	Audrey Post Cindy Suhrweir
Ushers	Bob Eshleman Jan Harrison	
Altar Guild	Rita Ford Susan Warren	Beth Alexander
Counters	Kirsten Ebbesen Rob Schiffer	Margaret Bowers Patricia Handschy

PRAYER REQUESTS

New concerns: Judy Renwick (friend of Judi Duffy), in therapy for Glioblastoma; Gil Johnson (friend of Judi Duffy), in therapy for pancreatic cancer; 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 Blubbaum (cousin of Sharon Simmons); 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; for rest and rejuvenation for Presiding Bishop Eaton as she takes a leave of absence for several months; Interim Presiding Bishop Michael Burk, providing leadership in Bp. Eaton's absence; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Pensacola.

World concerns: For all people suffering and/or recovering from hurricanes; migrants and asylum seekers; civil rights for people around the world; a ceasefire in Ethiopia and in Ukraine; peace in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FLOWER CHART FOR 2024: Do you have an anniversary, birthday, or special memory you would like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service by signing up for the 2024 Flower Chart located in the narthex. The cost is \$40, and you can place it in the offering plate.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: Want to read a sermon you missed? Visit <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>. Want to read the latest newsletters? Go to <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>. Want to browse a collection of St. Stephen songs? They're at <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>.