

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH
TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD SUNDAY



FEBRUARY 23, 2025

10 A.M.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

(850) 385-2728, Office

sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com, Email <http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com>

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

Katharine Gossman, Music Director

Lori Zengel, Office Manager

All Members, Ministers

Welcome, Everyone!

We are glad to have you with us this morning. If you need assistance in finding anything, one of our ushers will be glad to help you.

Restrooms are found in the fellowship hall and office building to the right as you exit the sanctuary. Proceed up the stairs and through the glass door. Unisex bathrooms are available through the kitchen in the office area. Please do not leave children under 12 unattended.

“Let the Little Children Come” Matthew 19:14 - In accordance with St. Stephen’s mission “to be a welcoming community . . .” we encourage all ages to worship on Sundays. We also believe that children learn to welcome others by how they have been welcomed. If you are a parent of a young child, know that this community supports your efforts to engage your child in worship and understands that it can be a stressful process. Having children in worship is a joy that we treasure, so please know that we welcome you and your children as they learn to become active members in Christ’s body. A nursery is available if parent or guardian desires. See usher for details.

Please remember to turn off your cell phone during the liturgy.

All the hymns for the worship service are in the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship book and numbered by hymn, not page.

For safety we no longer pass the offering plate. Financial gifts can be placed in the plate by the baptismal font.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church (ELCA) is a Reconciling in Christ congregation that explicitly welcomes people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. St. Stephen is equally committed to anti-racism. We welcome people without regard to race, ethnicity, age, family status, economic status, or differing abilities.

All are invited to receive the sacrament. Lutherans believe that Jesus Christ is present in, with and under the consecrated bread and wine of Holy Communion. Those not wishing to commune are welcome to the altar to receive a blessing. To indicate this, please cross your arms over your chest. If you are not able to come forward, please inform the ushers and the meal will be brought to you.

INTRODUCTION

Witnesses to the glory of God in the face of Jesus reflect that glory in the world. It was true for Moses. It was doubtless true for Peter, James, and John. We pray that it will be true of all of us who see God's glory in the word and in the supper and who are being "transformed into the same image" by God's Spirit.

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Leader: May the peace of the Lord embrace us. May the

5 love of the Lord light our way. We come to you

10 All: lost and broken. Your brilliance illuminates our flaws.

16 Leader: You know how our prayers ever fade. Yet always you

22 All: open your arms to us.

The assembly stands.



+ GATHERING +

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

P Send us your silence, Lord, that we may reflect on the ways we have kept you at arms length.

Silence for reflection.

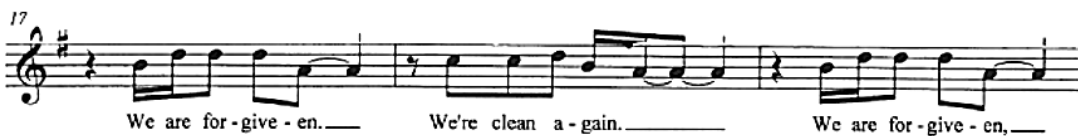
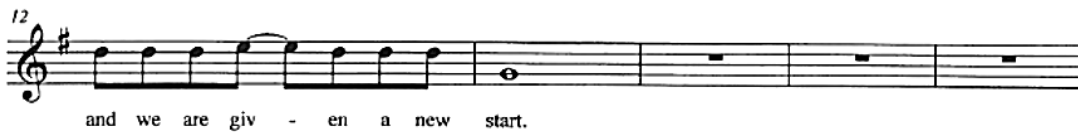
P Please accept our confession of sin, Lord, and bathe us in your forgiveness.

C Forgive us, Dear Lord. We fail to thank you for your gifts to us. We neglect those who are in need, those who could teach us of your love.

And we have such a dim view of ourselves compared with your vision of us. You have given us wings and urged us to fly. But we keep our feet on the ground and our backs turned to you. Forgive us, mighty God.

P Through the gift we can never hope to deserve, the gift of Jesus Christ, God melts away our sin. In the warmth of God's loving gaze - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - we are forgiven.

C We are forgiven!



1 Im - mor - tal, in - vis - i - ble, God on - ly wise,
 2 Un - rest - ing, un - hast - ing, and si - lent as light,
 3 To all, life thou giv - est, to both great and small;
 4 Thou reign - est in glo - ry; thou dwell - est in light;

in light in - ac - ces - si - ble hid from our eyes,
 nor want - ing, nor wast - ing, thou rul - est in might;
 in all life thou liv - est, the true life of all;
 thine an - gels a - dore thee, all veil - ing their sight;

most bless - ed, most glo - rious, the An - cient of Days,
 thy jus - tice like moun - tains high soar - ing a - bove
 we blos - som and flour - ish like leaves on the tree,
 all laud we would ren - der; oh, help us to see

al - might - y, vic - to - rious, thy great name we praise!
 thy clouds which are foun - tains of good - ness and love,
 and with - er and per - ish, but naught chang - eth thee.
 'tis on - ly the splen - dor of light hid - eth thee!

Text: Walter Chalmers Smith, 1824–1908, alt.
 Music: ST. DIONIS, Welsh traditional, arr. John Robens, 1807–1876

GREETING

P 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

3

If God were an ea - gle, he'd
If God were the wind, she'd run
If God were a moun - tain, a
God's more than a moun - tain, an

7

swoop through the trees. He'd flex all his fea - thers to
rings 'round the clouds. She'd swirl 'round the world just ca -
tow - er of stone, it would reach to the hea - vens, al -
ea - gle, the wind. God stretch - es be - yond where our

11

catch the least breeze. And peo - ple would shout,
ress - ing the crowds. And peo - ple would sigh,
might - ty, a lone. And peo - ple would cry,
hymns of praise end. Al - might - y and yet

15

"Oh, what beau - ty in flight!" If God were an ea - gle, so
"Oh, what gen - tle - ness there!" If God were the wind, whis - pering
"Oh, what strength we can feel!" If God were a moun - tain, a
del - i - cate and light, God came in the form of a

19

re - gal, so right. If God were an ea - gle, so
in eve - ry - where. If God were the wind, whis - pering
pow - er so real. If God were a moun - tain, a
ba - by one night, and that is the rea - son our

re - gal, so right.
in eve - ry - where.
pow - er so real.
hearts burn so bright.

PRAYER OF THE DAY



P Let us pray.

Holy God, mighty and immortal, you are beyond our knowing, yet we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Transform us into the likeness of your Son, who renewed our humanity so that we may share in his divinity, Jesus Christ our 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



+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Exodus 34:29-35

Moses' face shone with the reflected glory of God after he received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. The sight caused the Israelites to be afraid, so Moses wore a veil to mask the radiance of God's glory, taking it off when he spoke directly with God.

²⁹ Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. ³⁰ When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. ³² Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. ³³ When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; ³⁴ but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, ³⁵ the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

C Thanks be to God.

L ⁹ Proclaim the greatness of the Lord and worship upon God's ¹ holy hill;
for the Lord our God is the ¹ Holy One.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

Amen.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 3:12—4:2

In his debates with the Corinthians, Paul contrasts the glory of Moses with the glory of Christ. The Israelites could not see Moses' face because of the veil. But in Christ we see the unveiled glory of God and are transformed into Christ's likeness.

¹² Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, ¹³ not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. ¹⁵ Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; ¹⁶ but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

^{4:1} Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

R The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL: Luke 9:28-36 [37-43a]

The conversation about Jesus' suffering and death is enclosed in a dazzling foreshadowing of the resurrection. God affirms Jesus' identity, the disciples are stunned speechless, and Jesus resumes his mission with a demonstration of his power over evil.

P The holy gospel according to Luke, the ninth chapter.

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

²⁸ Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰ Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹ They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³ Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. ³⁴ While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” ³⁶ When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen. [

³⁷ On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. ³⁸ Just then a man from the crowd shouted, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child. ³⁹ Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him. ⁴⁰ I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” ⁴¹ Jesus answered, “You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.” ⁴² While he was coming, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. ^{43a} And all were astounded at the greatness of God.]

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.



1 Come, be - lov - ed of the Mak - er, come, be -
 2 See the Morn - ing - star now beck - on to those
 3 Fol - low to the birth of new - ness; fol - low
 4 There we too will burn and bright - en, God's re -
 5 Christ, bright im - age of the Mak - er, God, whose



hold the First - born One; see re - vealed cre - a - tion's
 bound to doubt and night; "Fol - low me," Christ calls in
 to the life of peace; fol - low to the hill of
 splen - dent work be - gun; glo - ry will as - cend and
 glo - ry none may pass, Spir - it, sun of love and



splen - dor crowned in glo - ry like the sun.
 wel - come, "come from dark - ness in - to light."
 an - guish; fol - low to the gar - den bliss.
 height - en, crown - ing us with glo - rious sun.
 splen - dor, bear us in - to light at last.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953
 Music: JILL, David Cherwien, b. 1957
 Text © 2001 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
 Music © 2002 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: God of grace,

Congregational response: hear our prayer.

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

"Brighter Than the Sun" -Helgen

(Refrain)

Brighter, brighter than the sun is the candle of the Holy One
Bigger, bigger than the sea are the waves of God washing over me.

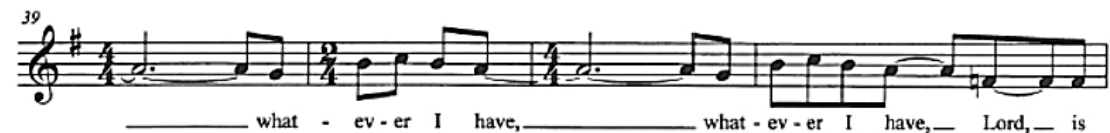
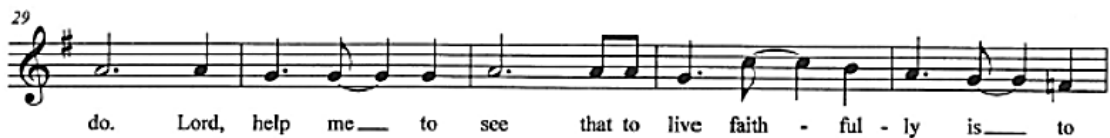
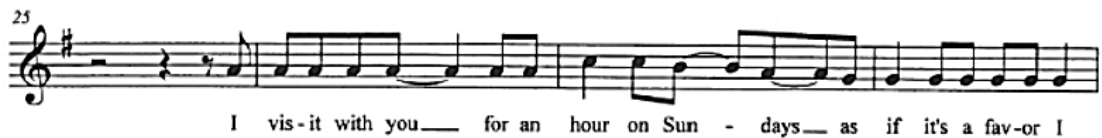
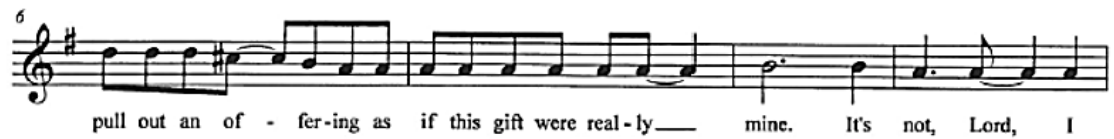
Gonna light my candle from the holy flame
of the one that's brighter than my own name.
Gonna wash my body in the holy sea,
in the water of life that's bigger than me. (refrain)

Gonna meet God's children at the fountain of life,
where the word and the water and the Lord Jesus Christ
make a new creation out of everyone:
Holy Spirit of love, let the waters run. (refrain)

Gonna gather round and gonna welcome in
every child to be and ev'ry one who's ever been.
Gonna breathe together with this spark of life:
Holy Spirit of God make our flame burn bright. (refrain)

OFFERING HYMN

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



Leader: All:

May the peace of the Lord embrace us. May the

9 Leader:

love of the Lord light our way. We lift our song

14 All: Leader:

high! We praise the God who gave us life. Hear, Lord,

18 faster All:

as we sing! Sing our praise to God on high.

27

Sing out! Sing out for joy! Sing so loud we'll drown out war.

31

Sing of peace for - ev - er - more. Sing our praise to God. A - men.

35

Sing our praise to God. Sing our praise to God. A - men.

39

Sing our praise to God. A - men. A - men. A - men. A -

44

men. A - men. A - men. A - men!

COMMUNION BLESSING

P Bless this bread, Holy God--baked by our hand but sanctified by your Word. On a night 2,000 years ago, shortly before he died to give us everlasting life, your loving Son took such bread and gave thanks to you. He broke it, gave it to his disciples and said, "Take this and eat. This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Bless this wine, Holy God--poured by our hand but made precious by your Son's sacrifice. After supper that night, Jesus took a cup of wine, like this one, and gave you thanks. He gave it to his disciples, telling them, "Take this, all of you, and drink from it. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for all people so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me."

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 The joy of the Lord is our strength. Come, eat this meal of gladness.

The assembly is seated.

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 wine and grape juice from pouring cups; take one glass 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 HYMN

Kneel me down now at your
soul with your ho - li -
sing of the peace I've
light shin - ing in my

6
feet. Kneel me down now at your feet. Kneel me down, kneel me down, -
ness. Feed my soul with your ho - li - ness. Feed my soul, feed my soul, -
found. Hear me sing of the peace I've found. Hear me sing, hear me sing, -
heart. Keep this light shin - ing in my heart. Keep this light, keep this light, -

10
- at the al - tar kneel me down, - for bread and wine, - the
- with the Prom - ise feed my soul, - with
- of your true love hear me sing, - of
- shine right through me, keep this light, - through

14
loving sign - from you, God, and your Son. - 1, 2, 3.
Feed my
Hear me
Keep this

21
- Through bread and wine, - the lov - ing sign - from you, God, and your Son. 4.
A - - - men.

25
A - - - men.

COMMUNION HYMNS

838 *Beautiful Savior*

815 *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

Nourishing God, at this table you have refreshed us with holy gifts of food and drink. Strengthen us for service, and send us out to embody your good news of liberation and healing for the sake of the world. In the name of Christ we pray,

C Amen.

+ SENDING +

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

P The Spirit of the triune God ✠ bless you with joy, anoint you with compassion, and send you in love.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly stands.

SENDING HYMN *Arise!*

A - rise, a - rise, em - brace the day! The world a - waits, what will you say to let the peo - ple know you're read - y to live by the power of this feast and to prac - tice the peace of our Lord? A - rise! - - - A - rise, a - rise, you're not a - lone. The song you sing will fol - low you home and hum in your heart. So if you be - gin to for - get whose you are, fix your eye on a star and sing: Lord! A - rise! A - rise!

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. Live in hope.

C Thanks be to God!

+ + +

*Arise! The St. Stephen Service
Music by Tom Buchanan, Lyrics
by Ron Hartung*

*Sundays and Seasons v.20220805.1416
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**Bob and Linda Eshleman dedicate this week's altar flowers
to the glory of God
and in celebration of their upcoming 57th wedding**

Calendar for March 02 - 09

March	2	Sun.	9 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10 am	Worship, Transfiguration of Our Lord Sunday
			11:15 am	Catered lunch, Pastor Emory Hingst Memorial Fellowship Hall (donations are welcome)
			12:30 pm	Mardi Gras Talent Show, sanctuary
	5	Wed.	6 pm	Ash Wednesday worship
			7 pm	Choir practice
	9	Sun.	9 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10 am	Worship, First Sunday in Lent

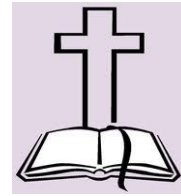
Next Sunday's Readings, First Sunday in Lent:

[Deuteronomy 26:1-11](#)

[Psalms 91:1-2, 9-16](#)

[Romans 10:8b-13](#)

[Luke 4:1-13](#)



SERVING EVERY SUNDAY

Pastor Tom, presiding and preaching

Katharine Gossman, piano

Karl Barton, flute

Denise Bookwalter, announcements

Choir: Karl Barton, Melissa Barton, Mark Canning, Kirsten Ebbesen, Rita Ford, Rudy Hehn, Susan Hehn, Colleen Holdcraft, Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Olivia James, Sandy Ness, Simone Schuster, Dave Suhrweir, Cassandra White

SERVING TODAY AND ONE WEEK FROM TODAY

Serving	March 2	March 9
Assisting Minister	Colleen Holdcraft	Rob Schiffer
Cup Minister	Rita Ford	Audrey Post
Cantor	Simone Schuster	Karl Barton
Lector	Judi Duffy	Erik Robinson
Acolyte	Ceilia Greeley or Graham Reece or Bastian Stover	
Tech Team	Mark Greeley Sandy Lamb-Daniels	Caroline Collins Sylvia Smith
Ushers	Bob Eshleman	Bob Eshleman Patrick Kennell
Altar Guild	Linda Eshleman Barbara Sullivan	Linda Eshleman Barbara Sullivan
Counters	Margaret Bowers Rob Schiffer	Janet Barber Lorraine Sundberg

PRAYER REQUESTS

New concerns: Family of Roch Edward (brother of Lynn Gunderson), as they mourn his passing; Margarete Deckert (mother of Caroline Collins), ongoing prayers for strength as she is recovering from illness; Donna Dickson Miller (friend of Audrey Post), facing health challenges; Gladys Kane for continued healing.

For the sick: Sallie Robinson (wife of Erik Robinson); Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White); Laura McDuffie (sister of Rob Schiffer).

In treatment for cancer: Ruth Hartung; Scott Simmons (son of Sharon Simmons). Gordon Fleischer; Stephanie Barber; Jim Saxman (uncle of Rob Schiffer); Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; James Sablan (brother of Donna Schiffer); Craig Timm (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Gil Johnson (friend of Judi Duffy); Amanda George (daughter-in-law of Rob Schiffer); David McManus (friend of Audrey Post); Shannon Miller (friend of Barb O'Donnell); Becky Graves (friend of Ridy Hofer); Timothy Stewart (son of Pepper Stewart).

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; Steve Michael (cousin of Rob Schiffer), in rehab after a serious accident.

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; 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 2025: 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 2025 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*](https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters). Want to read the latest newsletters? Go to [*https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters*](https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters). Want to browse a collection of St. Stephen songs? They're at [*https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters*](https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters).