

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



SEPTEMBER 14, 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

Rita Ford, 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

The grumbling of the religious leaders in today's gospel is actually our holy hope: This Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. That our God seeks and saves the lost is not only a holy hope, it is our only hope. As the writer of 1 Timothy reminds us, "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Thanks be to God.

WELCOME

PRELUDE

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.

Pastor: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever

Congregation: Amen.

P Let us confess our sin and come to God for healing.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Gracious God,

C have mercy on us. We confess that we have honored you with our lips, but have harmed our neighbors with our tongues. The cravings at war within us cause conflicts and disputes. In our desire to be first we make distinctions among ourselves. We place the needs of the poor and the suffering last. In your great mercy, forgive us our sins. Draw near to us with grace in time of need, and turn us to follow in the way of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P God promises to forgive our iniquity and to remember our sin no more. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, the source of eternal healing, your sins are forgiven.

C Amen.

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line of each system.

1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
2 Here I raise my Eb-en - e - zer: "Hith-er by thy help I've come";
3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be;

streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas-ing, call for songs of loud - est praise,
and I hope, by thy good plea-sure, safe-ly to ar - rive at home.
let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan-d'ring heart to thee.

While the hope of end-less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,
Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-d'ring from the fold of God;
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.

teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good-ness prove.
he, to res - cue me from dan-ger, in - ter - posed his pre-cious blood.
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

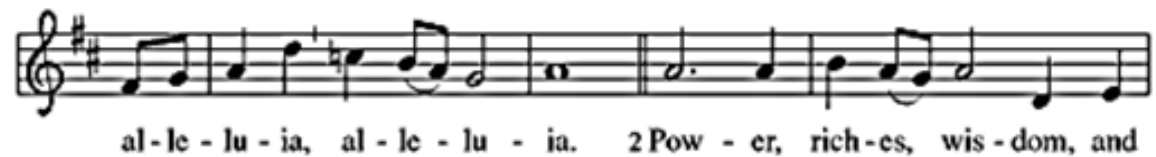
Text: Robert Robinson, 1715-1790, alt.
Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813

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



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.

O God, overflowing with mercy and compassion, you lead back to yourself all those who go astray. Preserve your people in your loving care, that we may reject whatever is contrary to you and may follow all things that sustain our life in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME



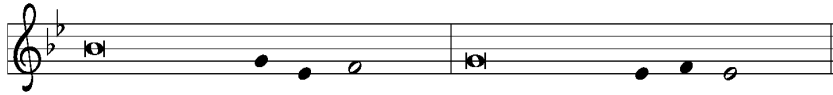
FIRST READING Exodus 32:7-14

While Moses is on Mount Sinai, the people grow restless and make a golden calf to worship. Today's reading shows Moses as the mediator between an angry God and a sinful people. Moses reminds God that the Israelites are God's own people, and boldly asks for mercy for them.

⁷The Lord said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; ⁸they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' " ⁹The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. ¹⁰Now let me alone so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, and of you I will make a great nation." ¹¹But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹²Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' " ¹⁴And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

Reader	The Word of the Lord.
C	Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-10 *We sing the psalm responsively.*



Leader ¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your ¹ steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out ¹ my offenses.

C ²Wash me through and through ¹ from my wickedness,
and cleanse me ¹ from my sin.

L ³For I know ^l my offenses,
 and my sin is ev- ^l er before me.

C ⁴ Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil ¹ in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right ¹ in your judgment.

L ⁵ Indeed, I was born ¹ steeped in wickedness,
 a sinner from my ¹ mother's womb.

C ⁶ Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.

L ⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I ¹ shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be pur- ¹ er than snow.

C ⁸ Let me hear | joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken | may rejoice.

L ⁹Hide your face ¹from my sins,
 and blot out ¹all my wickedness.

C ¹⁰ Create in me a clean [|] heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- [|] it within me.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

Amen.

SECOND READING: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

The letters to Timothy and Titus are called the pastoral epistles because they contain advice especially intended for leaders in the church. Here the mercy shown to Paul, who once persecuted the church, is cited as evidence that even the most unworthy may become witnesses to the grace of God.

¹²I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he considered me faithful and appointed me to his service, ¹³even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience as an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

R The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Luke 15:1-10

Jesus tells two stories that suggest a curious connection between the lost being found and sinners repenting. God takes the initiative to find sinners, each of whom is so precious to God that their recovery brings joy in heaven.

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

C Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” ³ So he told them this parable: ⁴ “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. ⁸ “Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ ¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

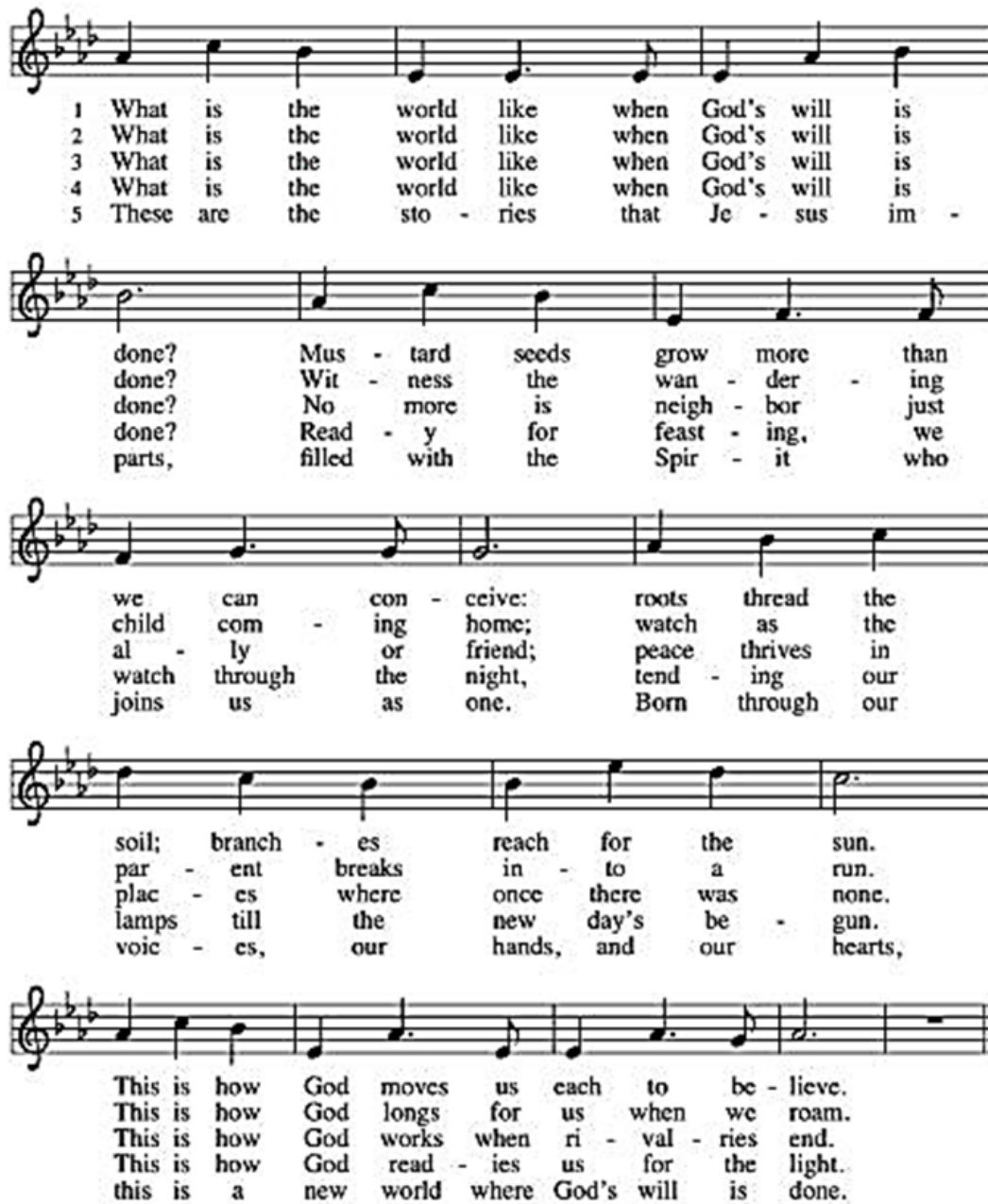
P The gospel of the Lord.

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 What is the world like when God's will is
 2 What is the world like when God's will is
 3 What is the world like when God's will is
 4 What is the world like when God's will is
 5 These are the sto - ries that Je - sus im -

done? Mus - tard seeds grow more than
 done? Wit - ness the wan - der - ing
 done? No more is neigh - bor just
 done? Read - y for feast - ing, we
 parts, filled with the Spir - it who

we can con - ceive: roots thread the
 child com - ing home; watch as the
 al - ly or friend; peace thrives in
 watch through the night, tend - ing our
 joins us as one. Born through our

soil; branch - es reach for the sun.
 par - ent breaks in - to a run.
 plac - es where once there was none.
 lamps till the new day's be - gun.
 voic - es, our hands, and our hearts,

This is how God moves us each to be - lieve.
 This is how God longs for us when we roam.
 This is how God works when ri - val - ries end.
 This is how God read - ies us for the light.
 this is a new world where God's will is done.

Text: Adam M. L. Tice, b. 1979

Music: NEW WORLD, Sally Ann Morris, b. 1952

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.

We greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

The assembly is seated.



OFFERING

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

ANTHEM *"God Bestows on Every Sense"* - Tice/Giamanco
(from All Creation Sings hymnal)

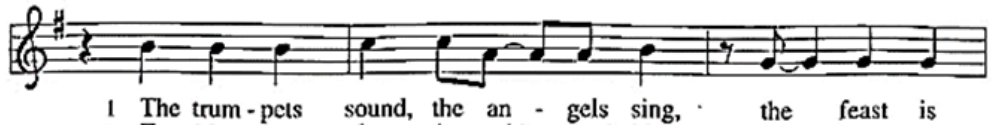
God bestows on ev'ry sense
beauty as hope's evidence:
signs of what the earth will be
just beyond what we can see.

Catch a fleeting glimpse of grace
in an unexpected place:
just a taste, the smallest crumb
of the banquet yet to come.

Vibrant pictures in our dreams,
brushed with crystal color schemes,
vanish from a waking mind,
leaving just a trace behind.

God makes all creation new,
turning back what people do,
building up what we destroy,
singing sorrow into joy.

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



Text: Graham Kendrick, b. 1950

Music: Graham Kendrick

Text and music © 1989 Make Way Music, admin. Music Services in the Western Hemisphere

THE FEAST IS READY
LM and refrain

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

Congregation:

The musical score is written on five staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 6/8. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score includes a variety of note values including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. The final measure of the fifth staff ends with a double bar line.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and
might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!
Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, 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.

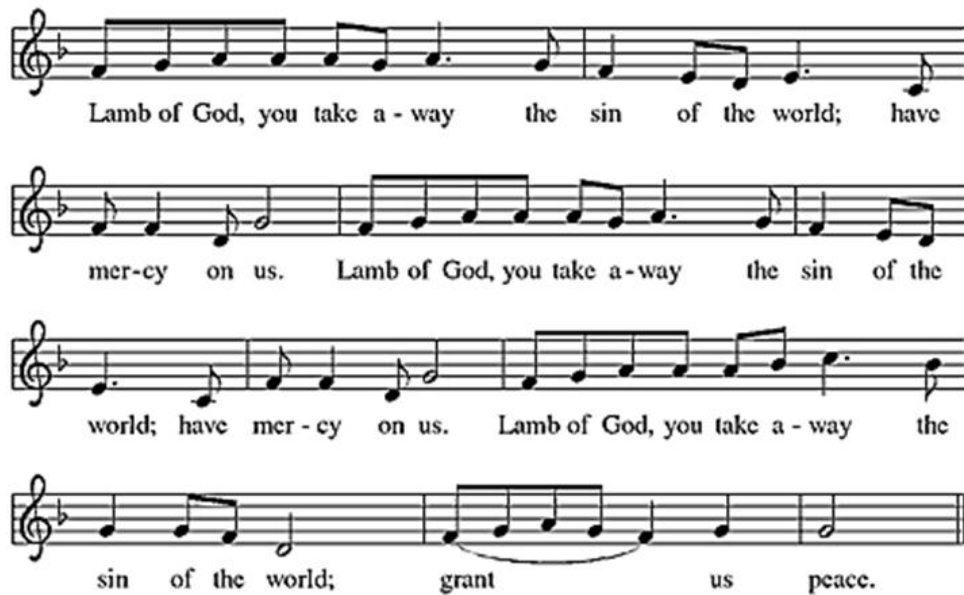
C **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Jesus welcomes you to this table. Come, here is your God.

The assembly is seated.

LAMB OF GOD



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 a communion glass from one of the trays at the corners as you approach the rail. Leave the empty glass on the lower rail. Wheat-free wafers are available -- simply tell the pastor. If you do not wish to receive the meal, simply fold your arms over your chest to receive a blessing from the pastor.

COMMUNION HYMNS

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 789 | <i>Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us</i> |
| 675 | <i>O Christ our Light, our Radiance True</i> |

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

O God, through this meal you have strengthened us and appointed us to be your servants. Send us to do good and to share our possessions with all in need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

C Amen.

+ SENDING +

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

P The God of righteousness, who gives justice to the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry, who sets the prisoners free, ✠ bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly stands.



1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found; was blind, but now I see.
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt., sts. 1–4; anonymous, st. 5

Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835; arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1851–1921, alt.

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. Do not lose heart.

C Thanks be to God!

+ + +

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**Today's altar flowers are dedicated
to the glory of God**

Calendar for September 14 – September 21

Sept	14	Sun.	9 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10 am	Worship, Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
	10	Wed.	7:00 pm	Choir practice
Sept.	21	Sun.	9 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10 am	Worship, Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

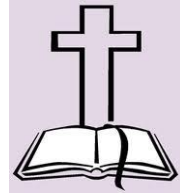
Next Sunday's Readings, Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost:

[Amos 8:4-7](#)

[Psalm 113](#)

[1 Timothy 2:1-7](#)

[Luke 16:1-13](#)



SERVING EVERY SUNDAY

Pastor Tom, presiding and preaching

Katharine Gossman, piano

Karl Barton, flute

Denise Bookwalter, announcements

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

SERVING TODAY AND ONE WEEK FROM TODAY

<i>Serving</i>	September 14	September 21
<i>Assisting Minister</i>	Beth Alexander	Kirsten Ebbesen
<i>Cup Minister</i>	Colleen Holdcraft	Susan Warren
<i>Cantor</i>	Mark Canning	Susan Hehn
<i>Lector</i>	Astrid van der Mark	Colleen Holdcraft
<i>Acolyte</i>	Ceilia Greeley or Graham Reece or Bastian Stover	
<i>Tech Team</i>	Caroline Collins Sandy Lamb-Daniels	Loraine Sunberg Audrey Post
<i>Ushers</i>	Jan Harrison Patrick Kennell	Jan Harrison Patrick Kennell
<i>Altar Guild</i>	Rita Ford Susan Warren	Beth Alexander
<i>Counters</i>	Margaret Bowers Patricia Handschy	Janet Barber Susan Warren

PRAYER REQUESTS

For the sick: Sallie Robinson (wife of Erik Robinson); 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; Jim Saxman (uncle of Rob Schiffer); Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; Craig Timm (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Gil Johnson (friend of Judi Duffy); David McManus (friend of Audrey Post); Shannon Miller (friend of Barb O'Donnell); Timothy Stewart (son of Pepper Stewart).

Health and protection: For those encountering fear & uncertainty around government cuts and the future of Medicaid. For immigrants and refugees who are working and raising families in the United States to be safe and secure without unnecessary deportations.

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; 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; Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart), Donna Schiffer for the passing of her sister.

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; Bishop Pedro Suarez; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry.

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 Gaza 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/sermons>. 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/songs-of-st-stephen>.

CHURCH COUNCIL	
President , Denise Bookwalter	
Treasurer , Jennifer Dritt	Buildings Coordinator , Sandy Lamb-Daniels
Worship & Music , Susan Hehn	Grounds Coordinator , Rob Schiffer
Care & Hospitality , Lawana Lamb-Daniels	Outreach , Sharon Simmons
Mutual Ministry , Sylvia Smith	Education & Discipleship , Emily Stover
Communications , Audrey Post	Youth , Graham Reece