



# Ash WEDNESDAY

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

**St. Stephen Lutheran Church**

*February 14, 2024 – 7:00 PM*

**Gathering: The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God**

**We gather in silence.**

*Please spend some time listening for what God might be saying to you in the silence. To begin our worship, the choirs will sing Psalm 51.*

**Call to Worship**

The Lord God formed humans from the dust of the ground.

**God breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, and we became living beings.**

Made from the dust, but filled with the Spirit, we gather for worship and community.  
**And if we do not worship, the dust itself will rise up in praise.**

In this moment we are living and conscious, proclaiming God's goodness to all creation.

**And when we return to dust and bones, our stories will testify to love and justice.**

So, breathe in the Holy Spirit, knowing you are alive for a moment in time.

**We breathe and know these things to be true. Let us worship the Life-Giver together. Amen.**

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Word: God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song**

**First Lesson**

**Joel 2:1-2, 12-17**

<sup>1</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
    sound the alarm on my holy  
mountain!  
    Let all the inhabitants of the land  
tremble,  
    for the day of the LORD is coming, it  
is near—  
    <sup>2</sup>a day of darkness and gloom,  
    a day of clouds and thick darkness!

Like blackness spread upon the  
mountains  
    a great and powerful army comes;  
their like has never been from of old,  
nor will be again after them  
in ages to come.  
<sup>12</sup>Yet even now, says the LORD,  
    return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with

mourning;  
<sup>13</sup>rend your hearts and not your clothing.  
 Return to the LORD, your God,  
 for he is gracious and merciful,  
 slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,  
 and relents from punishing.  
<sup>14</sup>Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,  
 and leave a blessing behind him,  
 a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God?  
<sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
 sanctify a fast;  
 call a solemn assembly;  
<sup>16</sup>gather the people.

Sanctify the congregation;  
 assemble the aged;  
 gather the children,  
 even infants at the breast.  
 Let the bridegroom leave his room,  
 and the bride her canopy.  
<sup>17</sup>Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.  
 Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD,  
 and do not make your heritage a mockery,  
 a byword among the nations.  
 Why should it be said among the peoples,  
 'Where is their God?'"

*Reader: "The Word of the Lord." Response: "Thanks be to God."*

### **Canticle of Joel**

*The Cantor will lead the Canticle, please respond with this refrain when indicated:*

### **Second Lesson**

### **2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10**

<sup>20b</sup>We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>6:1</sup>As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup>For he says,

"At an acceptable time I have listened to you,  
 and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! <sup>3</sup>We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup>but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great

endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup>beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup>by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup>truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup>in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see--we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

*Reader: "The Word of the Lord." Response: "Thanks be to God."*

### **Lenten Acclamation**

---



We are turn - ing, Lord, to hear you; you are mer - ci - ful and kind -



slow to an - ger, rich in bless - ing, and with love to us in - clined.

### **Gospel**

**Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

*Response after announcement of the Gospel: "Glory to you, O Lord."*

<sup>1</sup>"Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

<sup>2</sup>"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>16</sup>"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup>"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

*Response at the conclusion of the Gospel: "Praise to you, O Christ."*

**Homily**

Pastor Jon Nelson

*Silence for reflection and prayer.*

**Hymn of the Day**

*All Things of Dust to Dust Return*

ACS 920

Bulletin page 12

**Invitation to Lent**

### **Confession of Sin**

---

Ash Wednesday provides us with the gift of time and space for repentance. Let us prepare our hearts for the season of Lent by confessing our sins:

**Righteous God, we join with worshipers all over the globe, uniting in our collective agreement that we desire to be more like you—more loving, more compassionate, more generous, more just, more patient, more faithful. And as we focus our gaze upon your perfection, we cannot help but witness the ways in which we fail to live according to that standard, both individually and collectively. We have failed on a global scale, perpetuating systems that damage whole groups of people, whole species of creation, and whole generations of children.**

*(Silence)*

We have failed on an individual scale in ways only we know in our minds and hearts.

*(Silence)*

**So, we confess these sins with full conviction that you bear our sins with compassion and completion. And when we confess our sins, we find liberation from the chains binding us. We pray these things in the name of the one who delivers us from sin. Amen.**

Bless the Lord, O friends of God, and do not forget all God's benefits—who forgives all our iniquity, who heals all our diseases, who redeems our lives from the Pit, who crowns us with steadfast love and mercy. Receive the peace of the complete pardon of Christ. **Amen.**

## Imposition of Ashes

*At this time, if you desire to receive ashes, please come forward and kneel at the altar rail.*

*The pastor applies ashes to the forehead of each person with the words:*

*“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”*



### Hymn

*Abide with Me*

ELW 629

Bulletin page 13

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,  
**That we may show forth your glory in the world.**  
By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,  
**Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

### Prayers of Intercession

*Please offer prayers, from where you are standing. Please end your petition with:  
“Lord, in your mercy.” All will respond: “**Hear our prayer.**”*

### Meal: God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

#### Offering

**Offertory Anthem** *Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days* Kenneth T. Kosche  
*Matins & Chancel Choirs*

#### Offertory Prayer

Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name. **Amen.**

#### Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,  
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Blessed are you, O God of the Universe.

Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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 in 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 in remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's Passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

O God of resurrection and new life:

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.

Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.

Breathe new life into us.

Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

With St. Stephen and your holy ones of all times and places,

with the earth and all its creatures,

with sun and moon and stars,

we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **The Lords Prayer**

**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.**

### **Holy Communion**

*When receiving Communion, either stand or kneel at the Rail. Pastor will distribute the bread and a Communion Assistant will come with a tray of pre-filled cups of wine and grape juice. The juice will be in the middle of the tray. Gluten-free wafers are available as an alternative to bread. St. Stephen is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, so all are welcome to receive Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper.*



## Lamb of God



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;  
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;  
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.  
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.  
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

## Communion Hymn *Just As I Am, without One Plea*

ELW 592  
Bulletin page 14

### To You All Hearts Are Open



To you all hearts are o - pen, to



you all de - sires known. To you there are no



se - crets, al - might - y God; we come to you.

## Table Blessing

### Prayer After Communion

Embodied God, at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love. **Amen.**

**Sending: God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world**

**Sending Hymn**

*Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church*

ELW 321

Bulletin page 15

**Blessing**

---

**God, the giver of love,  
✠ Christ, the resurrection and the life,  
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth  
bless you in this Lenten journey.  
Amen.**

**Dismissal**

---

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness;  
be of good courage;  
hold fast to that which is good;  
render to no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;  
help the afflicted; honor all people;  
love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.  
**Thanks be to God.**

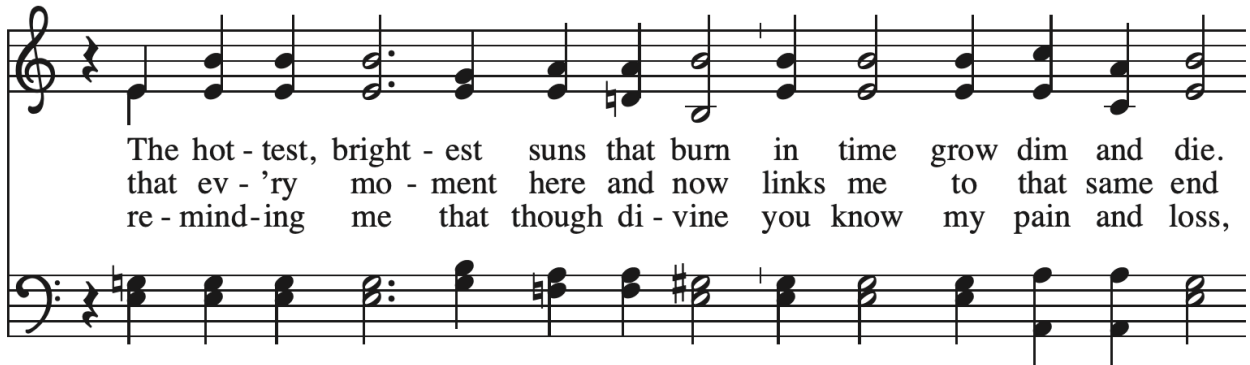
**Please depart in silence.**



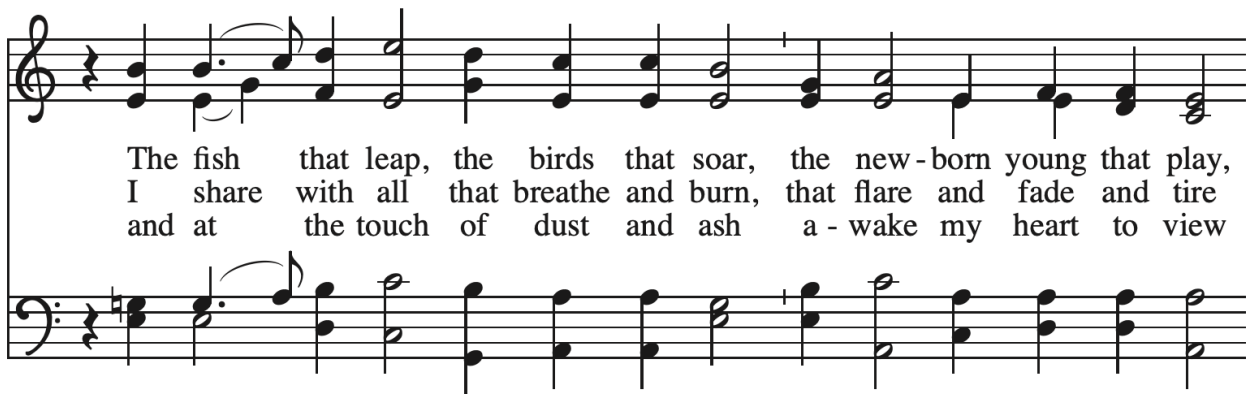
# All Things of Dust to Dust Return



1 All things of dust to dust re - turn on earth and in the sky.  
2 Lord, mark with dust and ash my brow so I may com-pre-hend  
3 Lord, mark up - on my brow this sign: a stark and bar-ren cross



The hot - test, bright - est suns that burn in time grow dim and die.  
that ev - 'ry mo - ment here and now links me to that same end  
re - mind - ing me that though di - vine you know my pain and loss,



The fish that leap, the birds that soar, the new-born young that play,  
I share with all that breathe and burn, that flare and fade and tire  
and at the touch of dust and ash a - wake my heart to view



the leaves that fill the for - est floor re - vert to dust and clay.  
yet by their wan - ing light dis-cern your own un - dy - ing fire.  
how death it - self is but a flash that dies a - way in you.

Text: Thomas H. Troeger, b. 1945  
Music: THIRD MODE MELODY, Thomas Tallis, 1505–1585  
Text © 2009 Oxford University Press. All rights reserved.

# Abide with Me

1 A - bide with me, fast falls the e - ven - tide.  
 2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day;  
 3 I need thy pres - ence ev - 'ry pass - ing hour;  
 4 I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;  
 5 Hold thou thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes,

The dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide.  
 earth's joys grow dim, its glo - ries pass a - way;  
 what but thy grace can foil the tempt - er's pow'r?  
 ills have no weight, and tears no bit - ter - ness.  
 shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;

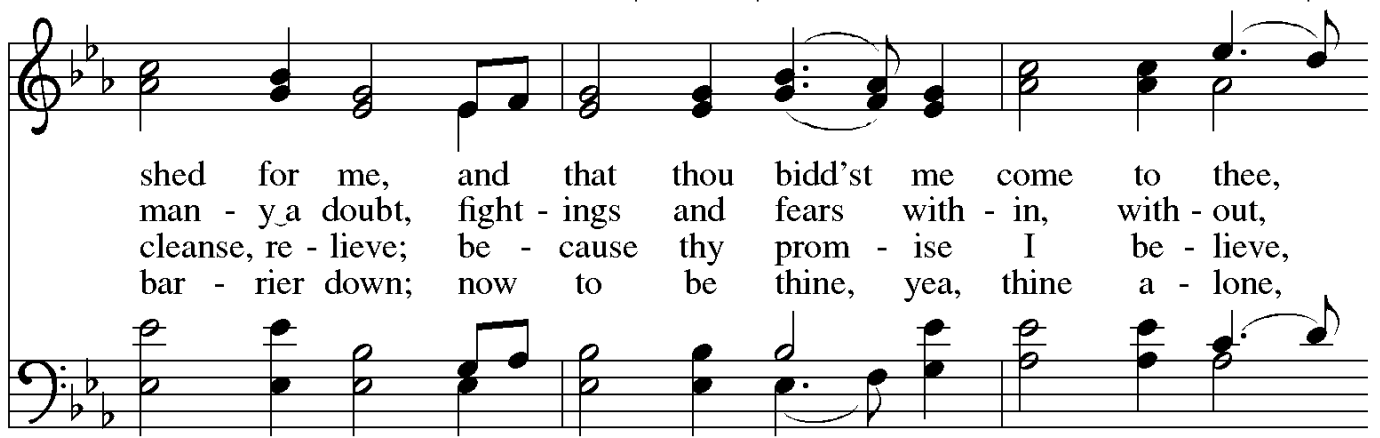
When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee,  
 change and de - cay in all a - round I see;  
 Who like thy - self my guide and stay can be?  
 Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy vic - to - ry?  
 heav'n's morn - ing breaks, and earth's vain shad - ows flee;

help of the help - less, oh, a - bide with me.  
 O thou who chang - est not, a - bide with me.  
 Through cloud and sun - shine, oh, a - bide with me.  
 I tri - umph still, if thou a - bide with me!  
 in life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me.

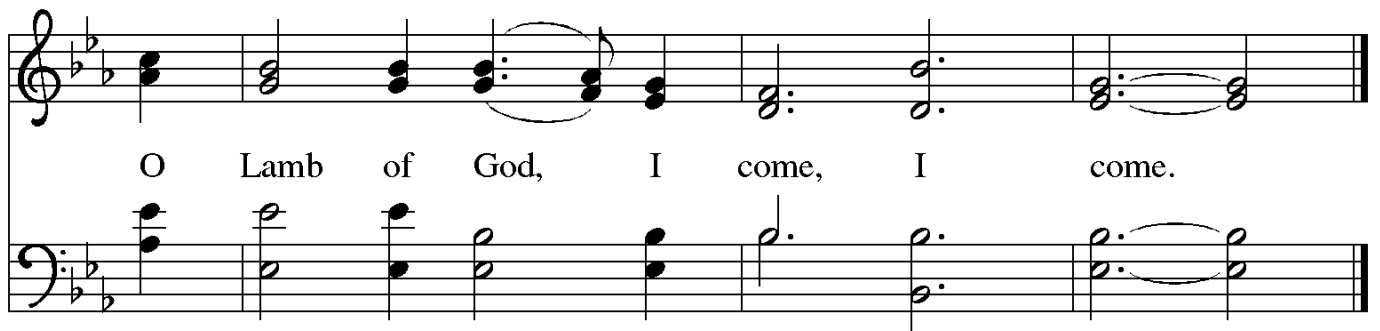
# Just As I Am, without One Plea



1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was  
2 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y a con - flict,  
3 Just as I am, thou wilt re - ceive, wilt wel - come, par - don,  
4 Just as I am; thy love un - known has bro - ken ev - 'ry



shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,  
man - y a doubt, fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out,  
cleanse, re - lieve; be - cause thy prom - ise I be - lieve,  
bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,



O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

# Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church

1 E - ter - nal Lord of love, be - hold your church  
 2 So dai - ly dy - ing to the way of self,  
 3 If dead in you, so in you we a - rise,

walk - ing once more the pil - grim way of Lent,  
 so dai - ly liv - ing in your way of love,  
 you the first - born of all the faith - ful dead;

led by your cloud by day, by night your fire,  
 we walk the road, Lord Je - sus, that you trod,  
 and as through ston - y ground the green shoots break,

moved by your love and toward your pres - ence bent:  
 know - ing our - selves bap - tized in - to your death:  
 glo - rious in spring - time dress of leaf and flow'r,

far off yet here— the goal of all de - sire.  
 so we are dead and live with you in God.  
 so in - to life and glo - ry shall we wake.

Text: Thomas H. Cain, 1931–2003  
 Music: OLD 124TH, *Trente quatre psaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551  
 Text © Thomas H. Cain. Used by permission of estate.

## Leading our Worship and Hospitality This Evening

Acolyte/Crucifer.....(7:00pm) Carol Wiers  
Altar Guild .....(7:00pm) Carol Wiers  
Bread Baker..... Pat Fretz  
Communion Assistants ..... (7:00pm) Chris Punchard and Carol Wiers  
Greeters/Hosts ..... (7:00pm) Alison Carney  
Lector.....(7:00pm) Sandy Peterkin  
Preacher..... Pastor Jon O Nelson  
Ushers.....(7:00pm) Reed and Karen Nester

# ***St. Stephen Lutheran Church***

***612 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185***

***[www.saintstephenlutheran.net](http://www.saintstephenlutheran.net)***

***(757) 229-6688***

**We gather to worship and study God's Word to deepen our faith and live our Christian witness and service in the community.**

*(St. Stephen Lutheran Church Vision Statement)*

## **All of Us, Called Through Our Baptisms**

**Pastor Jon Nelson** (320-295-8861)

**Pastor Alex Sheppard-Witt** (717-434-5037)

**Karen Ives** – Director of Music (757-229-6688)

**Hollie Jones** – Parish Administrator (229-6688)

**Diana Tiller-Dichtel** – Parish Nurse (232-5924)

**Holly Ready** – Preschool Director (229-6688)

**Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center** (873-2273; counselors are in Williamsburg on Thursdays)

Doing Ministry in the World

[Pastorjn@saintstephenlutheran.net](mailto:Pastorjn@saintstephenlutheran.net)

[Pastorasw@saintstephenlutheran.net](mailto:Pastorasw@saintstephenlutheran.net)

[MusicDir@saintstephenlutheran.net](mailto:MusicDir@saintstephenlutheran.net)

[Office@saintstephenlutheran.net](mailto:Office@saintstephenlutheran.net)

[Parishnurse@saintstephenlutheran.net](mailto:Parishnurse@saintstephenlutheran.net)

[Preschool@saintstephenlutheran.net](mailto:Preschool@saintstephenlutheran.net)



*Copyright Information*

*Lord Who Throughout these Forty Days; contributor Kenneth T. Kosche*

*© 2003 Morning Star*

*One License Licensing Permission Reprinted/Streamed with permission under*

*One License #A721099; CCLI Permission Reprinted/Streamed with permission under CCLI License #11256031; Permission granted, St.*

*James Press*

*New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*

*Revised Common Lectionary, Copyright © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts, admin Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission.*

*Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License # SB164403*

