

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

Love God, Love People, Form Faith.

One of 13,000 Stephen Ministry Congregations Around the World

We believe that community is *beautiful* and *messy* and *fulfilling* and *conflicted* and...the POINT. God calls us together into community for the sake of one another, our neighbors, and creation. We don't always get it right, but we trust that when we center the love and grace that Jesus taught, we will get it right more often than not. *You are welcome here!* We don't expect perfect, put-together people; we don't want you to conform to us and our ways; we want you to show up as who you are and to experience the love and grace of God as we have experienced it. And we hope that once you do, you will join us in sharing it with others too.



Fourth Sunday in Lent March 30, 2025

For Your Prayers – March 31 - April 6, 2025

Lectionary readings for this week:

Monday: Leviticus 23:26-4; Revelation 19:1-8; Psalm 53 *Tuesday*: Leviticus 25:1-19; Revelation 19:9-10; Psalm 53

Wednesday: 2 Kings 4:1-7; Luke 9:10-17; Psalm 53

Thursday: Isaiah 43:1-7; Philippians 2:19-24; Psalm 126 *Friday:* Isaiah 43:8-15; Philippians 2:25—3:1; Psalm 126 *Saturday*: Exodus 12:21-27; John 11:45-57; Psalm 126

Next Sunday's Lessons: Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126 (5); Philippians 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8

<u>Join your prayers for healing</u> with God's desires for Susan Britcher, Ellen Bushman, Kristin Carter, Bob & Ginny Cummings, Sharon Jacobs, Donna Kittelson, Jim Mayfield, Carole Meyer, Helen Nelsen, and George Vonderheide.

<u>Pray for those unable to come to worship</u>: Ailene Bartlett, Ed Brown, Ruth & Forrest Fenstermaker, Bob and Angie Groom, Pat Janot, Marilyn Johnson, Jeanne Nelson, Darlene Simon, and Kay Wasaff.

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: Susan, Charles Baugh, Donald and Carol Baum, Gary Baumgarten, Robi Bayard, June Brantley, Sue Havola Berhs, Mary Bloom, Tim Brown, Raymond Bunn, Karin Cavanaugh, Chris Clarke, Amaree Cluff, Ruth Ann Coski, Judy Craun, Judy Drezek, Becky Drury, Darrin and Rosemary Dunn, Tanya Fritz, Hollis Fulton, David Gade, Joel Gillespie, Greg Gildner, Joan and John Goodhart, Jonathan Hallman, Charee Hampton, Sue Hassan and family, Andy Havola, Nick Havola, Bradley, Kim, Joan and Laurie Heintzelman, Lisa Hill, Nancy Hodge, Jaxon Ireland, Lynn Isenburg, Claudia Jacobik, Brian Johnson, Don Johnson, Connie Kendrick, The Kennedy family, Jenn Kramer, Elaine Lane, Marnah Lund, Keara Mahony, Jim Monteith, Trish Macerelli, Laura Margolin, Jack Mayfield, Doug MacKenzie, Jimmy Mitchell, Liz Montalvo, Mia Monteith, Ed Moninger, Kim Morris, Bob Myers, Jeanette Osborn, Coral Pumley, Kurt Recktenwald, Stephen Rier, Sam Scovill, Pamela Sharp, Vasili Soultoukis, Kenneth & Laura Spencer, Chad Strausbaugh, Al Stern, Monika Stern, George and Jewel Thomas, Charley Underdahl, Brenda Webster, Pat Whelan, Caleb Winig, and Elaine Wrich.

Fourth Sunday in Lent

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

Welcome

Centering Music Amazing Grace Michael Helman

St. Stephen Ringers

Confession and Forgiveness

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,

who forgives all our sin,

whose mercy endures forever. Amen.

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate One,

you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,

but our lives do not always reflect you

and your love for the world.

We do not show others the tender compassion

you have shown to us.

We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality

you grant to all people.

We oppress others,

even though you have set us free again and again.

We squander the abundant gifts of the earth.

Transform our lives

and guide us again in the way of the cross.

Amen.

Beloved in Christ,

God's arms are always stretched open wide

to welcome the wandering ones home.

In + Christ your sins are forgiven.

You have a place in God's house forever.

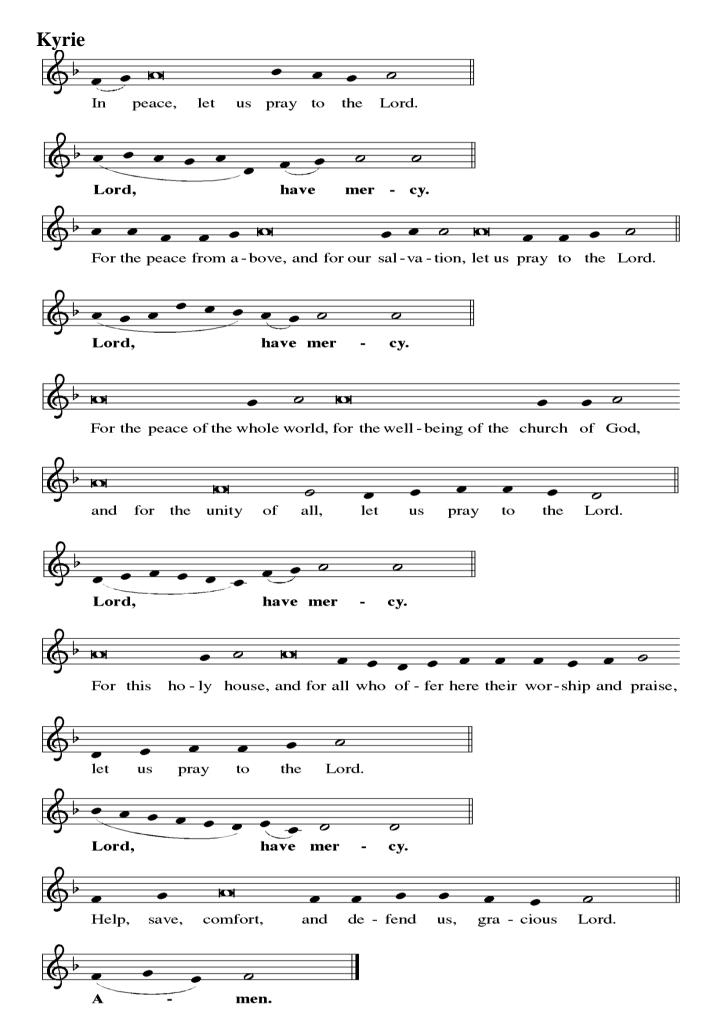
Amen.

Gathering Song Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

ELW 807

Bulletin Page 11

Greeting: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**



Prayer of the Day

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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

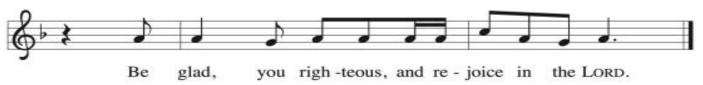
First Reading Joshua 5:9-12

By celebrating the Passover and eating the produce of the promised land instead of the miraculous manna that had sustained them in the desert, the Israelites symbolically bring their forty years of wilderness wandering to an end at Gilgal.

⁹ The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day. ¹⁰ While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

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

<u>Psalm</u> _____ Psalm 32



- ¹ Happy are they whose transgressions | are forgiven, and whose sin is | put away!
- ² Happy are they to whom the LORD im- | putes no guilt, and in whose spirit there | is no guile! *Refrain*
- ³ While I held my tongue, my bones with- | ered away, because of my groaning | all day long.
- ⁴ For your hand was heavy upon me | day and night; my moisture was dried up as in the | heat of summer.
- ⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con- ceal my guilt.

 I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.
- ⁶ Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in | time of trouble; when the great waters overflow, they | shall not reach them. *Refrain*
- ⁷You are my hiding-place; you preserve | me from trouble; you surround me with shouts | of deliverance.
- ⁸ "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that | you should go; I will guide you | with my eye.
- ⁹Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you."

- ¹⁰ Great are the tribulations | of the wicked; but mercy embraces those who trust | in the LORD.
- ¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice | in the LORD; shout for joy, all who are | true of heart. *Refrain*

Second Reading

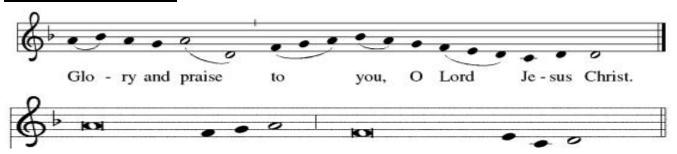
2 Corinthians 5:16-21

One way to describe the gospel is the promise that in Christ everything is transformed into newness. All mistakes, all deliberate sins, all old history is reconciled with Christ's resurrection. This is Paul's strong message to the congregation in the city of Corinth.

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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

Lenten Acclamation



I will arise and go to my fa- | ther and say,* I have sinned against heaven | and before you. (Luke 15:18)

Gospel

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Jesus tells a parable about a son who ponders his father's love only after he has spurned it. The grace he receives is beyond his hopes. That same grace is a crisis for an older brother who believes it is his obedience that has earned his place in the father's home.

Response after announcement of the Gospel: "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: ^{11b} "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed

and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." ' ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. ²⁵ "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' 31 Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.""

the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating;

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

Sermon Reconciliation Pastor Jon Nelson

Silence for prayer and reflection.

Hymn of the DaySoftly and Tenderly, Jesus is Calling
ELW 608
Bulletin page 12

Affirming Our Faith (20th century South African creed)

Jesus taught us to speak of hope as the coming of God's kingdom.

We believe that God is at work in our world turning hopeless and evil situations into good. We believe that goodness and justice will triumph in the end and that tyranny and oppression cannot last forever. One day all tears will be wiped away; the lamb will lie down with the lion, and justice will roll down like a mighty stream.

True peace and true reconciliation are not only desired, they are assured and guaranteed in Christ. **This is our faith. This is our hope. Amen.**

Prayers

Each petition concludes, "God, in your mercy," Response: "receive our prayer."

II. Meal: God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

Offering

Offerings are gathered for the mission of the church: preaching and teaching the good news of our salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ and caring for the poor. During the offering, the table is set for the Lord's Supper.

Offering Music

Rejoice! I Found the Lost

Wayne Wold

Offertory Prayer

Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

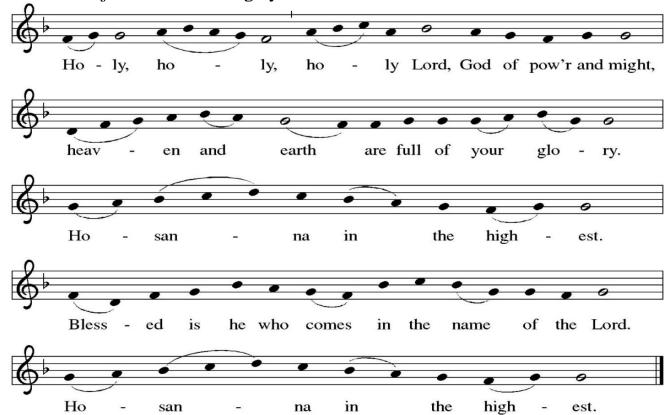
The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

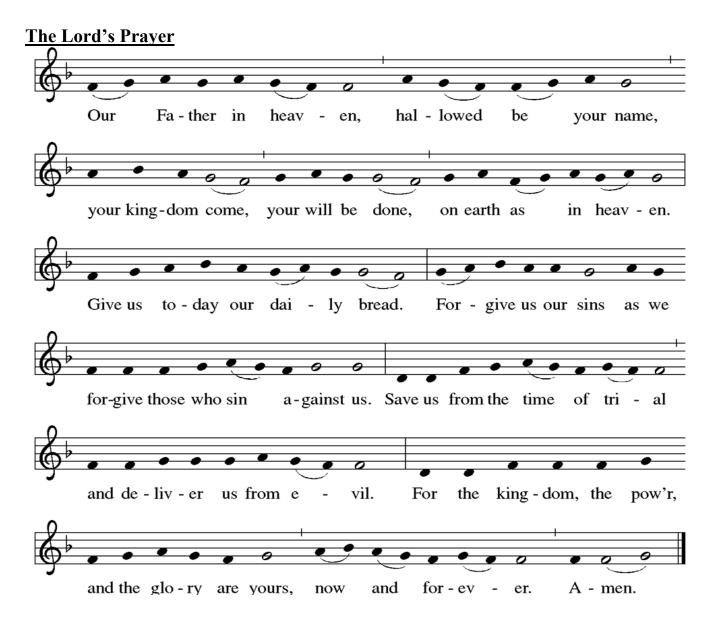
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

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 to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. 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:

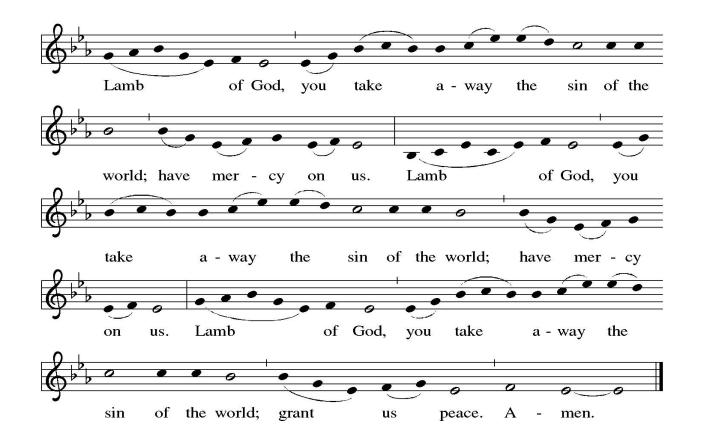


Words of Institution



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.



Communion Music

St. Stephen Ringers

Henry Purcell

Communion Hymn

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

ELW 588 Bulletin page 13

Table Blessing

Prayer after Communion

Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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

Sending Hymn

Amazing Grace

ELW 779

Bulletin pages 14

Blessing

God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit, + bless you now and forever. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you. Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Amazing Grace

Jack Schrader

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing



Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling



There's a Wideness in God's Mercy



- 1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer cy, like the wide-ness of the sea;
- 2 There is wel-come for the sin-ner, and a prom-ised grace made good;
- 3 For the love of God is broad-er than the mea-sures of our mind;
- 4 'Tis not all we owe to Je sus; it is some-thing more than all:



God's jus - tice which is there's a kind-ness in more than lib - er - ty. there is mer-cy with the Say-ior; there is heal - ing in his blood. the E - ter - nal most won-der - ful - ly kind. the heart of is great - er good be - cause of e - vil, larg - er mer - cy through the fall.



There is no place where earth's sor - rows are more felt than up in heav'n. There is grace e - nough for thou-sands of new worlds as great as this; But we make this love too nar - row by false lim - its of our own; Make our love, O God, more faith - ful; let us take you at your word,



There is no place where earth's fail - ings have such kind - ly judg-ment giv'n. there is room for fresh cre - a - tions in that up - per home of bliss. and we mag - ni - fy its strict-ness with a zeal God will not own. and our lives will be thanks - giv - ing for the good-ness of the Lord.

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound



As We Gather

Restrooms & First Aid

- ❖ A gender-neutral, family restroom and a Women's restroom can be found in the hallway behind our Worship Space.
- ❖ Additional Men's and Women's restrooms can be found on the lower level of the church building.
- ❖ A first aid kit and an A.E.D. can be found hanging on the wall in the hallway behind our Worship Space.

Live-streaming

❖ We regularly live-stream our services and cannot guarantee that you will not appear on our YouTube channel. Sitting in the East Wing or the NE section of the Worship Space will minimize your chances of being on screen. We can also bring communion to you if you inform an usher of that desire.

Parents! Thanks for bringing your children to worship.

- ❖ Did you know that intergenerational worship is the single most important activity encouraging children's faith formation? (See vibrantfaith.org)
- ❖ When parents and children need to take a break for a few minutes, there's a play area (aka "prayground") with toys and books in the East wing of the Worship Space.
- ❖ Age-appropriate activity bags are available in the Gathering Space ask an usher for assistance.

Assistance is Available for You:

- ❖ An induction loop is provided for the benefit of hearing aid users. To use, please switch your hearing aid to "T."
- **❖ Large print** worship materials are available ask an usher.

<u>Health Update</u>: We always encourage you to monitor yourself for symptoms of illness and to worship from home if you are experiencing any. We have masks and hand sanitizer available for use in our building should you require.

What's Happening Today

<u>Flowers this morning</u> are given by Carol & Bob Harman in celebration of their great-granddaughter, Joanna's second birthday.

<u>HVAC:</u> Please keep in mind that Cox Powell is actively working in the **Fellowship Hall, Mon-Fri** From **7AM-3:30 PM**. They are constantly in and out of that space to have access to the attic space above.

<u>Congregational Conversation.</u> The church council would like to continue our conversation about the best way to move forward with our ministry plan, especially as regards staffing. To that end we will be having **ONE WORSHIP SERVICE on Sunday, March 30th at 9:45 AM, followed by a congregational conversation in the Fellowship Hall and a potluck.** We hope you can join us to offer your input!

Upcoming

Wednesday evenings in Lent

at St. Stephen: **5:30 PM** – Soup supper in the Fellowship Hall

- Sign up to bring soup and/or bread on the poster in the Gathering Space!
- 6:30 PM: Lenten Midweek Service. "The 5 Senses"
- **❖** April 2- Touch
- * April 9- Taste

Maundy Thursday: 6:30 PM at St. Stephen:

Pastor Gerry Johnson will preach

Good Friday: 6:30 PM at Our Saviour's:

Pastor Jon Nelson will Preach

Easter Vigil: 8:00PM at St. Stephen

<u>Refugee Family Sponsorship.</u> As can often happen in these situations, there was a long stretch of no action, followed by a sudden burst of it! We are excited that one portion of the family we have been trying to help out of Afghanistan has made it to the US. We know the first priority will be housing, quickly followed by furniture, groceries, diapers, and clothing. Please keep an eye out for ways you can help!

Avalon will be here between services on April 6th to talk about what they do and how you can help.

<u>HVAC UPDATE</u> The church building will be closed to all non staff **April 7th -11th** from **7am-5pm** for construction, however on **April 10th the building will be closed entirely** as they are bringing in the crane. **All church activities during the day will be cancelled this week**. We will still be able to have Lenten Services April 9th.

Many of you have expressed an interest in reviving the Quilting Group.

Several of us met with the ladies of Our Saviour's who are also interested. We are waiting for them to decide on a day and time for that group to meet. We would like to have those interested in getting this started here at St Stephen to meet on Thursday April 3rd at 12:30 in the library. Our hope is that with different days and times the ladies of both churches will be able to come together and create some beautiful quilts, comfort blankets, lap blankets etc. Perhaps our first project could be something for the beds of our family we are resettling here!

<u>The preschool</u> is in need of newspapers and individual seized yogurt cups. They can be dropped off at the office or just outside the office on the desk.

St. Stephen Calendar March 30-April 6, 2025

Our worship service is available on our website <u>www.saintstephenlutheran.net</u>, click on "Worship with Us" and "Services."

SUNDAY, March 30

9:25 AM Handbell Warm-up (Worship Space)

9:45 AM Worship – Holy Communion (livestreamed on our YouTube channel)

11:00 AM Faith Formation: Craft (Preschool)

11:00 AM Congregational Conversation (Fellowship Hall)

12:00 PM Potluck (Fellowship Hall)

5:00 PM LSA Bible Study & Dinner (College Room)

MONDAY, March 31

10:00 AM Staff meeting (Pastor's Office)

1:30 PM Bible Study (Library/Conference Room)

TUESDAY, April 1

8:00 AM Women's Breakfast (Capital Pancake House)

WEDNESDAY, April 2

0.55 This Toga (LST) Room	8:55 AM	Yoga (LSA Room)
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5:30 PM Soup and Bread Supper (Fellowship Hall)6:30 PM "Touch" Lenten Service (Worship Space)

7:00 PM Chancel Rehearsal (Worship Space)

7:00 PM AA Meeting (Fellowship Hall)

THURSDAY, April 3

8:00 AM Men's Breakfast (Capital Pancake House)
11:00 AM Bulletin Review (Library/Conference room)
1:00 PM Quilting Group (Library/Conference room)

5:30PM Handbell Practice (Worship Space)

FRIDAY, April 4

SATURDAY, April 5

10:30 AM	Memorial Service: Martin and Margaret Bleck
5:30 PM	AA Meeting (Library/Conference Room)
5:30 PM	Al-ANON F Meeting (Fellowship Hall)

SUNDAY, April 6 (LSA Sunday)

8:30 AM				YouTube channel)
O.SU ILIVE		m v cou cumicu	· OII OUI	I du I abe chamile,

9:30 AM Matins/Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Worship Space)

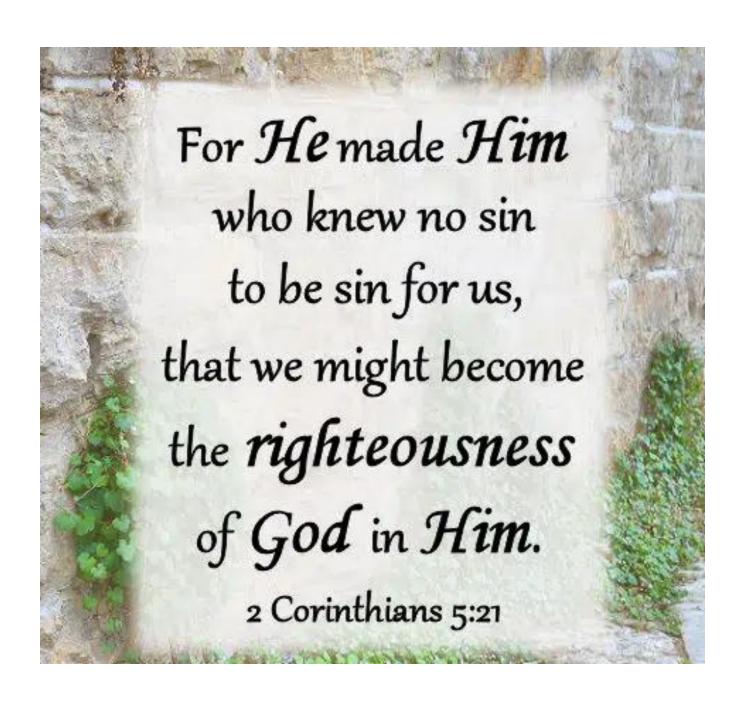
10:00 AM Faith Formation

11:00 AM Worship – Holy Communion (livestreamed on Facebook live)

6:00 PM Dinner (College Room)

Leading our Worship and Hospitality Today

Acolyte/Crucifer	Diane Tiller-Dichtel
Altar Guild	Amy Bergh
	•
	Janice Mayfield
Communion Assistants	
Lectors	Linda Baumgarten and Jeane Moore
Pastor	Pastor Jon Nelson
Tellers	Beth Grant and Stan York
Ushers	



St. Stephen Lutheran Church

612 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

www.saintstephenlutheran.net (757) 229-6688

Love God, Love People, Form Faith.

(St. Stephen Lutheran Church Vision Statement)

All of Us, Called Through Our Baptisms
Pastor Jon Nelson (320-295-8861)
Karen Ives – Director of Music (757-229-6688)
Hollie Jones – Parish Administrator (757-229-6688)
Jessica Kimball -Preschool Director (757-229-6688)
Paringula Pastoral Counseling Center (757-873-22)

Doing Ministry in the World Pastorjn@saintstephenlutheran.net MusicDir@saintstephenlutheran.net Office@saintstephenlutheran.net Preschool@saintstephenlutheran.net

Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center (757-873-2273; counselors are in Williamsburg on Thursday

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Welcome to St. Stephen Lutheran Church! Please fill this out and drop it in the offering plate or give it to an usher.

March 30, 2025

Name:	
For guests and members with changes:	
Address (Home)	
City/StateZip	
Telephone #	
E-Mail Address	
Guests Only: I belong to	
Church Address	
Please check as many as pertain:	
Member	
First time guest	
Regular guest	
Guest (out of town)	
Student at William & Mary	
Looking for a church home	
Desire to speak with pastor	
Would like more information about Stephen Ministry	
Would like a Stephen Minister to contact me	
Any comments? Please be sure your name is above, so we may respond, if necess	sary.

Prayer Requests

Name:	
Please remove from prayer co	ncerns:
Name:	

Welcome to St. Stephen Lutheran Church! Please fill this out and drop it in the offering plate or give it to an usher.

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Regular guest	
Guest (out of town)	
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Desire to speak with pastor	
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Any comments? Please be sure your:	name is above, so we may respond, if necessary.

Prayer Requests

Please remove from prayer concerns: Name:	Name:		
Name:	Please remove from	prayer concerns:	
	Name:		