

# St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

+ Fourth Sunday in Lent  
March 30, 2025



You are welcome here! As a Reconciling in Christ congregation of the ELCA, we believe that the gospel is God's gift to all people, shared unconditionally and without regard to race, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, socio-economic or family status, age, physical or mental abilities, outward appearance, or religious affiliation. We seek racial equality and justice. In this way, we live into the truth (Ephesians 2:14)—that Christ breaks down the dividing walls between us and makes us one.

# Gathering

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

## **Prelude**

## **Welcome**

## **Joys & Concerns**

## **\*\* Confession and Forgiveness**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.*

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.**

\*\* Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.

# \*\* Gathering Hymn

## *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

ELW 807



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, 1735-1790, alt.

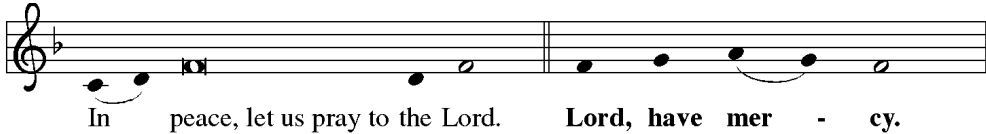
Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813

\*\* Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.

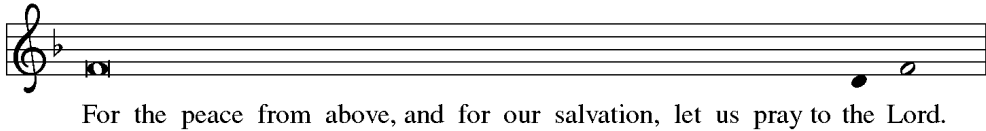
## \*\* Greeting

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.

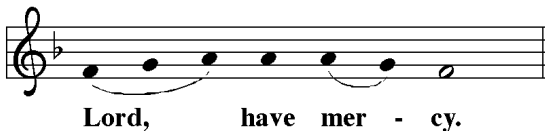
## \*\* Kyrie



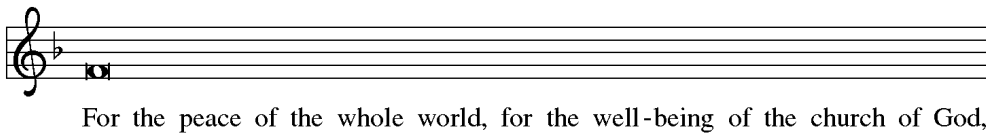
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



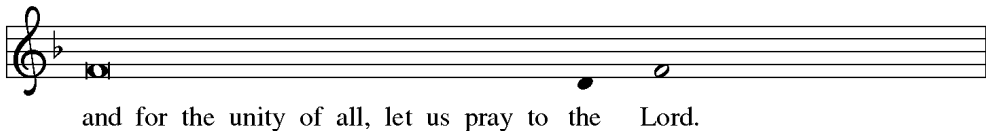
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



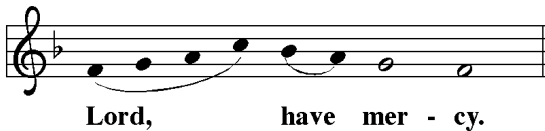
**Lord, have mer - cy.**



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

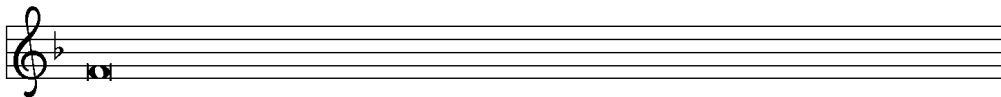


and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

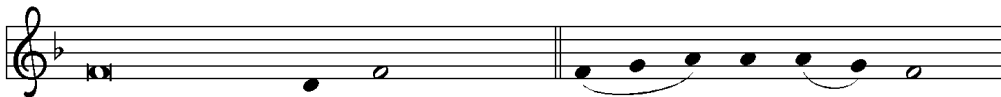


**Lord, have mer - cy.**

\*\* Please stand as you are able. **Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

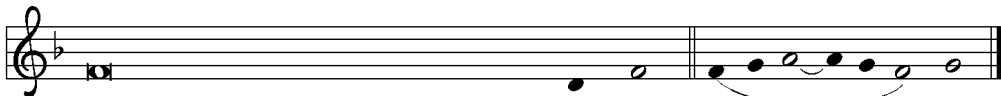


For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

## **\*\* Prayer of the Day**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

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.**

**\*\* Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

# Word

*God speaks to us in scripture, preaching and song.*

## First Reading

Joshua 5:9-12

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

## Psalm

Psalm 32

<sup>1</sup>Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,  
whose sin is covered.

**<sup>2</sup>Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity,  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

<sup>3</sup>While I kept silence, my body wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.

**<sup>4</sup>For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.**

<sup>5</sup>Then I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not hide my iniquity;  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"  
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

**<sup>6</sup>Therefore let all who are faithful  
offer prayer to you;  
at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters  
shall not reach them.**

<sup>7</sup>You are a hiding place for me;  
you preserve me from trouble;  
you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

**<sup>8</sup>I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.**

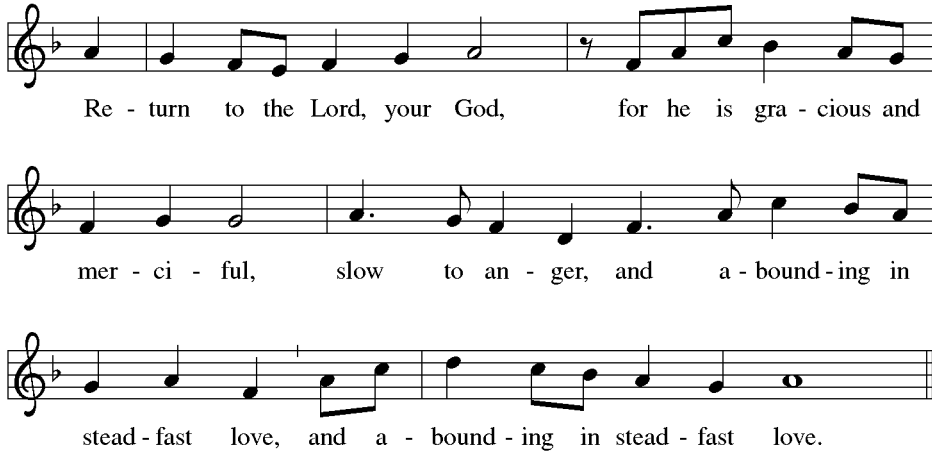
\*\* Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.

<sup>9</sup>Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding,  
whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle,  
else it will not stay near you.

<sup>10</sup>Many are the torments of the wicked,  
**but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.**

<sup>11</sup>Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous,  
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

**\*\* Gospel Acclamation**



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and  
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in  
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

**\*\* Gospel**

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.  
The Gospel of the Lord.

**Glory to you O Lord.  
Praise to you O Christ.**

**\*\* Gospel Acclamation**

*Please see gospel acclamation on page 6.*

**Sermon**

The Rev. Susan Loney

**\*\* Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

**\*\* Hymn of the Day**

*What Is the World Like*

ACS 1047



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



Mus - tard seeds grow more than we can con - ceive;  
Wit - ness the wan - der - ing child com - ing home;  
No more is neigh - bor just al - ly or friend;  
Read - y for feast - ing, we watch through the night,  
filled with the Spir - it who joins us as one.



roots thread the soil; branch - es reach for the sun.  
watch as the par - ent breaks in - to a run.  
peace thrives in plac - es where once there was none.  
tend - ing our lamps till the new day's be - gun.  
Born through our voic - es, our hands, and our hearts,

\*\* Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.





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

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## \*\* Apostles' Creed

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 the People

*Each portion of the prayer ends with:*

Response:                God in your mercy,                                **receive our prayer.**

\*\* Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.

# Meal

*God feeds us at the table of mercy and grace.*

## Sharing of the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.


## Offering

*Each week we give thanks to God for what God has given us: ourselves, our time, and our possessions. A financial gift to St. Stephen's supports the work of the congregation in our community.*

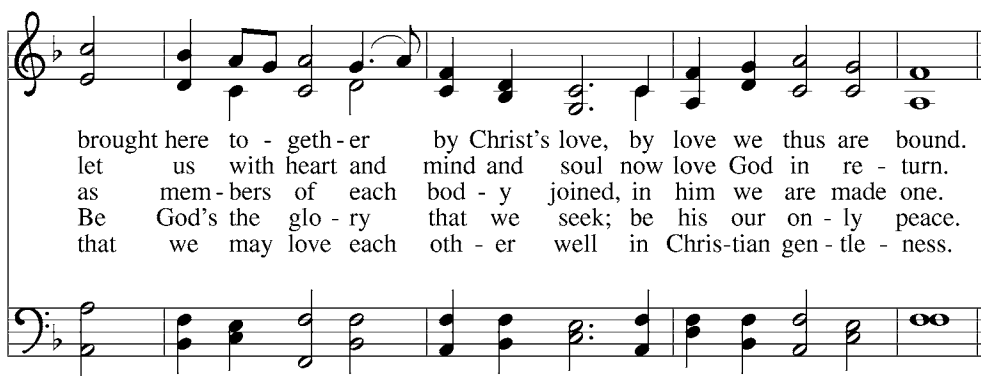
## \*\* Offering Song

*Where Charity and Love Prevail*

ELW 359



1 Where char - i - ty and love pre - vail, there God is ev - er found;  
2 With grate - ful joy and ho - ly fear, God's char - i - ty we learn;  
3 Let us re - call that in our midst dwells Christ, God's ho - ly Son;  
4 Let strife a - mong us be un - known; let all con - ten - tions cease.  
5 Let us for - give each oth - er's faults as we our own con - fess,



brought here to - geth - er by Christ's love, by love we thus are bound.  
let us with heart and mind and soul now love God in re - turn.  
as mem - bers of each bod - y joined, in him we are made one.  
Be God's the glo - ry that we seek; be his our on - ly peace.  
that we may love each oth - er well in Chris - tian gen - tle - ness.

Text: Latin hymn, 9th cent.; tr. Omer Westendorf, 1916–1997, alt.

Music: TWENTY-FOURTH, attr. Lucius Chapin, 1760–1842

Text © 1960 World Library Publications, 3708 River Rd., Franklin Park, IL 60131-2158. All Rights Reserved.

\*\* Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.

## \*\* Offering 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.**

## \*\* Dialogue

The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**And also with you.**

**We lift them to the Lord.**

**It is right to give our thanks and  
praise.**

## \*\* Preface

### \*\* Holy, Holy, Holy



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -



san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who



comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

\*\* Please stand as you are able. **Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

## \*\* Thanksgiving at the Table

...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.

## \*\* Lord's 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.

## \*\* Invitation to Communion

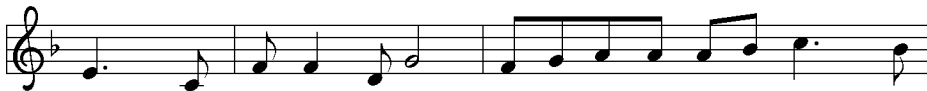
### Lamb of God



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



sin of the world; grant us peace.

\*\* Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.

## Communion

*Holy Communion is a free gift of God's grace and love. Everyone is welcome to share in this meal. Come forward, take an empty cup from the table, then kneel or stand along the Communion rail. If you require GF wafers, please tell the minister. Our chalices contain red wine and amber-colored juice. As you return to your seat, place your used cup in the receptacle at the end of the first row of pews. If you wish to receive words of blessing, simply tell the minister.*

## Communion Hymn

*As the Grains of Wheat*

ELW 465

*Refrain*

As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were  
gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread; so may all your peo-ple from  
all the ends of earth be gath-ered in - to one in you.

1 As this cup of bless - ing is shared with - in our midst,  
2 Let this be a fore - taste of all that is to come when

*Refrain*

may we share the pres - ence of your love.  
all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

Text: Didache, 2nd cent.; Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: AS THE GRAINS, Marty Haugen

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\*\* Please stand as you are able. **Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

**\*\* Communion Blessing**

**\*\* Post Communion Prayer**

Together, let us pray.

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.

**Announcements**

# Sending

*We are sent into the world to serve.*

**\*\* Blessing**

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

**\*\* Sending Hymn**

*God Bestows on Every Sense*

ACS 1069



1 God be - stows on ev - 'ry sense beau - ty as hope's  
2 Catch a fleet - ing glimpse of grace in an un - ex -  
3 Vi - brant pic - tures in our dreams, brushed with crys - tal  
4 In a burnt and black - ened field bro - ken ground be -  
5 God makes all cre - a - tion new, turn - ing back what

**\*\* Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**



ev - i - dence: signs of what the earth will  
 pect - ed place: just a taste, the small - est  
 col - or schemes, van - ish from a wak - ing  
 gins to yield ti - ny, frag - ile sprouts of  
 peo - ple do, build - ing up what we de -



be just be - yond what we can see.  
 crumb of the ban - quet yet to come.  
 mind, leav - ing just a trace be - hind.  
 green: hints of for - ests yet un - seen.  
 stroy, sing - ing sor - row in - to joy.

Text: Adam M. L. Tice, b. 1979  
 Music: ALL CREATION NEW, Anthony Giamanco, b. 1958  
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 Music © 2018 Augsburg Fortress

**\*\* Dismissal**

Go in peace,  
**To Love, To Invite, To Serve.**  
 God is gracious and merciful.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

*Chancel flowers are given by Carol Landry  
 in honor of Chuck's birthday*

\*\* Please stand as you are able. **Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

## Participants in Today's Service

**Pastor:**

The Rev. Susan Loney

**Music Director:**

Dr. Claudio Espejo

**Assisting Minister/Lector:**

Betty Sperati

**Usher:**

John Gordon

**Altar Guild:**

Carol Landry

**Ministers:**

The people of St. Stephen's

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Text the word "welcome" to 855-965-5200 to receive our weekly e-newsletter.

May God go with you today and every day.

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