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**February 26, 2025 Epiphany 8**

Sunday's Scriptures: Exodus 34: 29-35; ; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3: 12--4:2; Luke 9 28-43a



# parish news and events

## *Change for Change Tower*

*Our Change for Change Tower focuses on a local service organization each month.*

The Marchy Tower for Change: Blessing Bags

*About Blessing Bags*

Blessing Bags are small bags that we put together containing things like waters, a washcloth, granola bars, protein bars, etc. that can be freely given to folks who are living on the streets and are currently homeless and hungry. It's one small way we can assist those in need. Blessing bags are available in the narthex of the church.



# You're Invited!

*The one who serves the church serves God.*



*Flower Chart 2025 . . .*

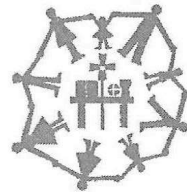
There is a new Flower Chart on the bulletin board in the narthex. If you wish to donate flowers on a particular Sunday, please provide that information on the flower chart. The offer is \$35.00.

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### *Holy Grill needs:*

Please consider bringing the following items needed for our Wednesday clothing ministry. We are currently in need of towels, washcloths (used but clean are most welcome), travel bug-spray, sunscreen, and men's clothing: especially underwear, shorts, summer shirts, sandals, sneakers, especially size 10 and work boots. We also need women's sneakers, and small and medium size women's bra's, underwear, bathing suits and shorts. We also are being asked for back packs lately, so if anyone has lightly used backpacks and pocketbooks might enjoy another life outside the closet, they would be welcome also!



# our sunday worship

## **Serving this week, March 2, 2025 (Epiphany 8 – The Transfiguration)**

Presiding Minister: The Rev. Dr. Sidney Nelson

Assisting Minister: Brad Goertzen

Crucifer: Carol Jacobson

Chalice Minister: Monica Kellington

Lector: Kathy Hopkins

Musician: Cesar Vidaud

Sound: Chris Belanger

Camera: Chris Belanger

Greeters/Ushers: Monica Kellington, Rosie Fennelli, John Holmes, Ida Solomita, Pat Engle

## **Serving next week, March 9, 2025 Lent I**

Presiding Minister: The Rev. Dr. Sidney Nelson

Assisting Minister: Erika Flanigan

Crucifer: Carol Jacobson

Chalice Minister: Rosie Fennelli

Lector: Nstslie Prego

Musician: Cesar Vidaud

Sound: Chris Belanger

Camera: Eric Castaneda



# IN OUR PRAYERS

*Prayer requests will be printed in the bulletin for three Sundays. You may renew names as many times as you wish. You may call the church office (954.942.4473), or e mail the of [sslcpompano@gmail.com](mailto:sslcpompano@gmail.com). Please renew your prayer requests every 3 weeks.*

## IN OUR PRAYERS...

In our prayers today we remember the people of Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, the people of the Middle East, those affected by gun violence, for those unjustly deprived of liberty, the victims of violence, discrimination and abuse, those who are suffering due to flooding, extreme heat, extreme cold and other natural disasters; for harmony, peace and unity across our divided nation, those who are homebound and others in our parish family in need of healing; for relief from anxiety and depression, for courage, for continued health and strength, for patience, direction, guidance, food addiction, for positive thinking, for peace and healing, for help with memory, and strength, for guidance with decisions ✚Rita, Louise, ✚✚Doris, ✚ Metz, Derrick ✚✚Carol, Jerry, Cheryl ✚✚✚Chris, Pat, Pastor Tom, Pastor Reggie, Linda, Dottie, Carol, Ron

### **Prayers for Friends of the Parish:**

*(Please renew your prayer requests every three weeks.)*

✚ ✚✚✚Alexandra, Serena, Robert, Aiden, Chandler, Becky, Braemen, Craig, Nettie, Ed, Barbara, Paula, Emilia, George, Jessica, Frank, Nick, Susane, Abby, Marge, Sharon, Mik, Isaiah, Theresa, Audrey, Gregory, ✚✚✚Alexandra, Greg, Evi, Malle, Tommie, Gregory, Nadine, Peggy, David, Pat, Eric, Karen, Shelley, Joseph, Michelle, Barbara, Frank, Brad, Mik, Isaiah,



## Lifting the Veil

The transfiguration is frustrating for disciples—past and present—who long for an unmediated experience of God. Jesus' glory is revealed, and then, just as suddenly, a cloud descend the vision fades. And even though Paul contrasts the Christian's experience of God with Moses's veiled experience of God, he notes that we see the glory of the Lord "as though reflected in a mirror" (2 Cor. 3:18). Even with unveiled faces, we don't see directly, or even clearly. Even when God is revealed in shining glory, much remains veiled and hidden.

As he witnesses Jesus' transfiguration, Peter's understanding remains veiled; ours does too. The glimpses we get of God's glory—through the veil or reflected in the mirror—leave us with an expectation-shattering, alarming, overwhelming, and awesome. The love of God shines too brightly to view directly, and yet we do have the privilege of directly experiencing that love in baptism, in communion, in service to God, and in relationship with God's creation and our neighbors in need. The veils we contend with daily are the barriers that prevent us from truly seeing those neighbors, caring for creation, and seeing the shining face of Jesus in the faces of people who are different, hungry, difficult, enemy, invisible, or poor. God is always revealed in ways that surprise and confuse us, whether shining on the mountaintop or dying on the cross.

Moses and Elijah occur at the center of the gospel story—two prophets of the Old Testament, of whom many in our congregations only have vague recollections. Consider using time within the sermon or elsewhere in worship to tell the stories of these witnesses to God's goodness, love, mercy, and justice. With rising anti-Semitism in our communities, preachers have an opportunity and a task to invite folks to see the Jewishness of Jesus and continuity between the Hebrew Bible and the gospel writers.

The theological concept of the *Imago Dei* can breathe new life and speak good news. A vision that we are made in God's image can break into understandings that humans are “sinner in the hands of an angry God,” the title of a sermon preached by Jonathan Edwards in 1741, or, as John Calvin put it, totally depraved. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians encourage Christians that they are being transformed, through Christ, into the image of God, acting as mirrors for one another to shine God's goodness throughout the world.

## Which Brings Us to Lent Hypocrites in Good Company



Critics of Christianity often point out that Christians are hypocrites. Christians publicly espouse a certain set of rules for living—including care for creation, serving God and neighbors in need, and loving our enemies—and, just as publicly, fail to live up to those rules every day and in every way.

If you ask many a person why they don't go to church, they will tell you in no uncertain terms it's because of Christians. While that certainly sounds harsh, there are more than a few elements of truth contained therein. People have observed the behaviors of church people and have frequently found them incompatible with the gospel. We're not always setting the best example. A pastor often tells the story of people who say they don't want to go to church because of all the hypocrites. He reassures them that they should feel right at home. Church is for real people, and real people fail to do and say the right things—real people are hypocrites. Campolo argues that the Christian ideal is to know you're a hypocrite and earnestly work to be less hypocritical.

All the same, we don't want to be hypocrites or show-offs. We question the motives behind our public and private spiritual practices; we question our neighbors' motives too. In today's gospel we hear about fasting cheerfully and praying in secret. And yet, as we leave the church building we bear a public and very noticeable sign of faith right on our foreheads. Lent bears with a bold, visible, unmistakable reminder of who we are: simultaneously mortal dust and baptized children of God. Simultaneously saint and sinner. Simultaneously hypocrites and earnest, hopeful Christians.

puppy knows the one who loves him is here again.... everything will be fine. Would that I could live up to that every moment of my life.

Which bring us to the beginning of Lent. One of the best images I heard of Lent, especially for one who is directionally challenged, is that it's time for U turns. It's time to check your map, or your paper map, or your GPS, and see where you're going, and maybe where you should be going. . . and to make the necessary course adjustments. And the church, down through the ages, has provided us with Lent after Lent where we might make those course adjustments and get back on track. And to ensure that we don't fool ourselves or waste our time, the church reminds us of the disciplines of prayer (*for the good of the soul*), fasting, (*for the good of the body*) and works of charity, (*for the good of the world*) to get us back on course. an opportunity. Don't let it pass you by. Become the person your dog (or cat or lizard) thinks you already are!

*God and Father of Jesus,  
you transfigured your Chosen One  
and in heavenly light  
revealed him as your Son.*

*Open our ears to the living Word  
and our eyes to his glorious presence,  
that we may be strengthened  
in time of fear and uncertainty,  
and one day pass over to share your glory.*

*We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, the light of the world,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God forever and ever.*

*Amen.*

### *We Are Surrounded by a Great Cloud of Witnesses. . . .*

#### **Perpetua and Felicity and companions, martyrs at Carthage, + 202; Friday, March 7, 2025**

Vibia Perpetua, a noblewoman, and Felicity, an enslaved woman, were catechumens at Carthage, northern Africa. They, with four other catechumens, had defied the Roman emperor and had forbidden conversions to Christianity, and were put to death in the amphitheater.

#### **Harriet Tubman, +1913; Sojourner Truth, +1883; renewers of society; Monday, March 10, 2025**

Harriet Tubman, born into slavery, helped about 300 others to escape slavery until the institution was abolished. Sojourner Truth, whose birth name was Isabella, was freed after slavery was abolished, and discerned a call to be a preacher. Taking the name Sojourner Truth, she set out on an evangelistic journey, where people found her testimony to be deeply moving.

#### **Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, +604; Wednesday, March 12, 2025**

Born into wealth and power, Gregory was for a time the chief administrator of the city of Rome. Giving this up for a life in the church, he was elected pope in 590. He influenced public worship through the establishment of a lectionary and prayers to correlate with the readings. Gregorian chant is named in his honor.



**What is Lent?** Lent is a 40-day period of preparation for Easter. For those who would be baptized at Easter (catechumens), this was their final push before baptism. For the already baptized, it was a time to dust off our baptismal garment, to make the necessary U turns in our lives to get us back on course, through prayer, fasting, and works of mercy, return to our baptism.

**When is Lent?** It's the forty days before Easter. Lent excludes Sundays because every Sunday is like a little Easter. Basically, it's about one-tenth of a year (like a tithe of time). Mardi is the day before Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday.

#### **Mardi Gras? What does that have to do with Jesus?**

Mardi Gras means "Fat Tuesday." It refers to the day before Lent starts. Since Lent always starts on a Wednesday, the day before is always a Tuesday. And it's called "Fat" or "Great" because it's associated with great food and parties. Since they didn't want to be tempted by sweets, meat, and other distractions in the house, they cleaned out their cabinets.

**Ash Wednesday**, the day after Mardi Gras, usually begins with a service where we recognize our mortality, repent of our sins, and return to our loving God. We recognize life as a precious gift from God, and we re-turn our lives toward Jesus Christ. We may make resolutions and commit to change our lives over the next forty days so that we might be more like Christ. In an Ash Wednesday service, usually a minister or priest marks the sign of the cross on people's foreheads, using ashes.

**Why ashes?** In Jewish and Christian history, ashes are a sign of mortality and repentance. Mortality, because when we die, our bodies eventually decompose and we become dust/dirt/ash/whatever. Repentance, because long ago, when people felt remorse for something they did, they would put ashes on their head and wear "sackcloth" (scratchy clothing) to remind them that sin is pretty uncomfortable and leads to a sort of death of the spirit. This was their way of confessing their sins and asking for forgiveness.

**How do I "do" Lent?** Are you searching for something more? Tired of running in circles, but not really living life with direction, purpose, or passion? It's pretty easy to get caught up in the drama of classes, relationships, family, and work. Our lives are filled with distractions that take us away from living a life with Christ. We try to fill the emptiness inside us with mindless, meaningless chatter, stimulants, alcohol, too many activities, or other irrelevant stuff. We run away from life and from God.

Lent is a great time to "repent" — to return to God and refocus our lives to be more in line with Jesus. It's a 40-day trial run in changing your lifestyle and letting God change your heart. might try one of these practices for Lent:

**FASTING:** Some people have been known to go without food for days. But that's not the only way to fast. You can fast by cutting out some of the things in your life that distract you from God. Some Christians use the whole 40 days to fast from candy, TV, soft drinks, cigarettes, or meat as a way to purify their bodies and lives. You might skip one meal a day and use that time to pray instead. Or you can give up some *activity* like worry or reality TV to spend time outside enjoying God's creation. What do you need to let go of or "fast" from in order to focus on God? What clutters your calendar and life? How can you simplify your life in terms of what you eat, wear, or do?

**WORKS OF MERCY:** Some Christians take something on *for* Christ. You can collect food for the needy, volunteer once a week to tutor children, or work for reform and justice in your community. You can commit to help a different stranger, coworker, or friend every day of Lent. Serving others is one way we serve God.

**PRAYER:** Christians also use Lent as a time of intentional prayer. You can pray while you walk, create music or art as a prayer to God, or savor a time of quiet listening. All can be ways of becoming more in tune with God. Pray for others; set a time aside, without TV, computer, cellphone, and read the scriptures, or simply sit quietly and "be" in the presence of God. Our praying does not always need to involve our talking. Sometimes we spend more time reminding God what God ought to do. Try spending time and listening to what God has to say to



## Lent 2025

March 5 is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent.

### Ash Wednesday Services:

Æ8:00am-9:00 AM: Drive thru ashes 14<sup>th</sup> Street Parking Lot  
 12:00 Ash Wednesday Holy Eucharist, with distribution of ashes  
 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Holy Eucharist, with distribution of ashes.

**Midweek Lenten Service: Every Wednesday at 12:00 in the church**

This week. . . . .

	<b>March 2</b>	9:00, Choir	Luther Room
<b>Sunday</b>	<i>Transfiguration</i>	10:15am, Worship	Sanctuary
		7pm, AA	Fellowship Hall
<b>Monday</b>	<b>March 3</b>	6:30pm, AA	Fellowship Hall
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>March 4</b>		
		8:00-9:00 Drive Thru Ashes	14 <sup>th</sup> Street Parking Lot
	<b>March 5</b>	9:00 Holy Grill	Church grounds
<b>Wednesday</b>	<i>Ash Wednesday</i>	12:00 Ash Wednesday Service	Sanctuary
		5:30pm Holy Grill	Church grounds
		7:00 Ash Wednesday Service	Sanctuary
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>March 6</b>	7pm, AA	Fellowship Hall
<b>Friday</b>	<b>March 7</b>		
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>March 8</b>	9-12 Threads of Love	Fellowship Hall



Subscribe Sunday	Past Issues Lent I	9:00, Choir 10:15am, Worship 7pm, AA	Luther Room Sanctuary Fellowship Hall	Translate ▼	RSS 📡
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### *We are here for you...*

The office is normally open Monday through Friday from 10:00am—1:00pm. Please be in touch with me or the office for any pastoral care needs. **If you would like Holy Communion at home because you cannot get out to church, please contact the office and the pastor will be glad to come by.** The interim pastor's email address remains the same as it has been for the pastor: [pastoratststephen@gmail.com](mailto:pastoratststephen@gmail.com). Pastor Sid's cell number is 561-463-8900. Don't forget to send prayer requests or call the office by **Thursday** each week if you have already entered them on the Sunday Welcome Card. You may call the office at 954-942-4473, or email us at [sslcpompano@gmail.com](mailto:sslcpompano@gmail.com).

This week. . . . ■ ■

*The Church Office is open Monday through Friday, 10:00am to 1:00 pm.*



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**St. Stephen Congregation Council 2025**

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### RECONCILING *in* CHRIST



*In response to the amazing love, mercy and grace of God, St. Stephen Lutheran Church is a community that openly welcomes all who are seeking God's divine love and grace. All are welcome in this place regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation or gender identity, economic situation or life situation, marital or relationship status, or your doubts about faith &*

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church. Our unity is in Christ. Your family, children, friends, spouses and partners are welcome. Your diversity and uniqueness enriches and expands our community. We are a Person  
in Christ congregation.

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