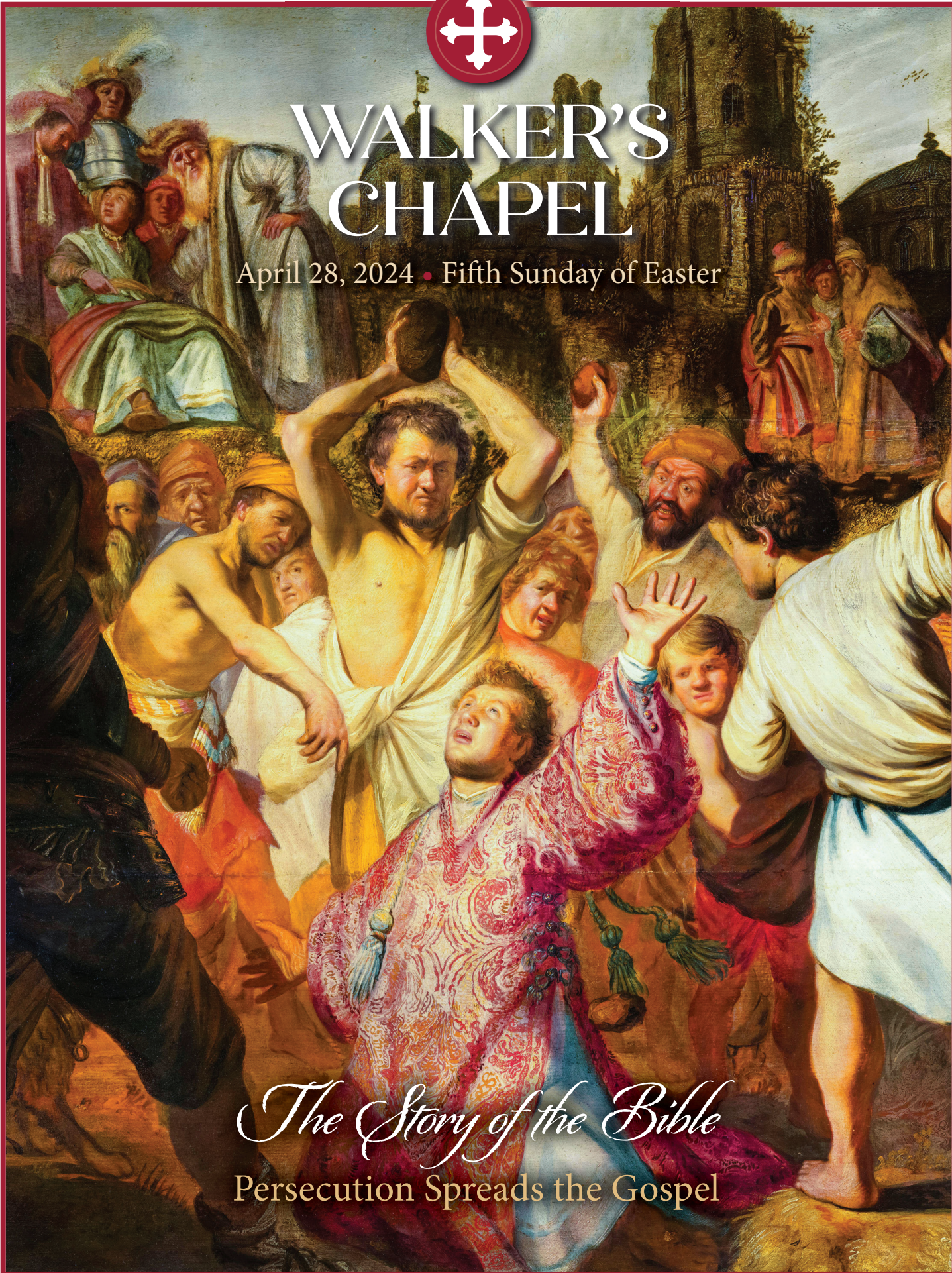




# WALKER'S CHAPEL

April 28, 2024 • Fifth Sunday of Easter

*The Story of the Bible*  
Persecution Spreads the Gospel



## Service of Worship

April 28, 2024 • Fifth Sunday of Easter

### *Prelude, Announcements, and Preparation*

#### *Words of Greeting*

**Leader:** May the grace of our Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

**People:** And also with you.

### **God Calls His People and Reveals Himself**

*God calls His people to worship and come before Him. The Creator of all things reveals Himself through His Word and calls us into His presence.*

#### **Call to Worship • Psalm 145:1-7; 10-13**

“I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness. They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your saints shall bless you! They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.”

#### **Hymn of Praise • Come, Thou Almighty King (Hymnal, page 101)**

### **God Calls His People to Confession, Repentance, and Reconciliation**

*The People of God respond to His Word by confessing their sins, repenting of their sinful ways, and seeking God's favor through the reconciling work of Jesus, the Son of God.*

#### **Prayer of Confession • Mk 16:15; Acts 1:8; Rom 10:14; 1 Pet 3:15; Lk 24:47-48; Mt 5:16**

**Leader:** Father, you have instructed us to go into all the world and preach your good news to the whole creation, but we often fail to praise your name even to those near us.

**People:** **You have given us the power to be your witnesses, but we have failed to proclaim your truth to others.**

**Leader:** How will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how will they believe in him of whom they have never heard?

**People:** **We have often kept your good news to ourselves rather than spreading it as we ought.**

**Leader:** Help us to always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks us for a reason for the hope that is in us.

**People:** Give us the courage to call others to repentance and faith in you.

**Leader:** Help us to let the light you have given us shine before others.

**All:** Give us the grace to proclaim your good works to the world for your glory. Amen.

### *Silent Prayers of Confession*

#### *Assurance of Pardon • Matthew 6:14-15*

“... if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Amen.

#### *Hymn of Praise • This is My Father’s World (Hymnal, page 111)*

### **God Teaches Us Through His Word**

#### *Scripture Reading • Acts 6:8-15; 7:54-60; 8:1-8*

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. Then they secretly instigated men who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and they set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.” And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel. . . .

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul approved of his execution.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.

## Sermon

*Persecution Spreads the Gospel – Jeremiah Pent, Pastor*

*Hymn of Praise • A Mighty Fortress is Our God (Hymnal, page 92)*

## God's People Respond in Grateful Praise

*Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession*

### *The Lord's Prayer*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. *Amen*

## God Sends His People Out to Be Light in Darkness

*After calling His people into His presence, forgiving their sins, and instructing them in His Word, God sends His people into the world to show His light in the darkness.*

*Hymn of Praise • O God, Our Help in Ages Past (Hymnal, page 30), verses 1, 2, 4, 7*

### *Benediction • Hebrews 13:20-21*

“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

*O Thou in Whose Presence*



Dear Shep - herd, I hear and will fol - low Thy call; I



know the sweet sound of Thy voice. Re - store and de - fend me, for



Thou art my All, And in Thee I will ev - er re - jice.

Text: Joseph Swain, *Redemption, a Poem in Five Books*, 1791; Music: DAVIS, Freeman Lewis, 1813.

Scripture quotes are from the ESV. Cover image: *The Stoning of Saint Stephen*, Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, 1625, detail, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, France.