

Worship livestream online at www.ststephenslutheran.org
Recorded for you to view anytime.
Please participate by having your worship bulletin and Celebrate ready

Zoom Bible Studies with Pastor Jim on Thursdays 11am & 7:30pm.
Check your email on Wednesday for the link to the Zoom meeting.

Our Mission Statement

St. Stephen's is a welcoming, healing community who worship
God in Christ, nurture people growing in faith,
serve others with acceptance and love,
invite people to share the joy of the spirit.

Reconciling in Christ

"We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace.
We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race
or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity,
gender expression, or relationship status.
We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or
mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances,
or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ."

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church E.L.C.A.
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831/476-4700 FAX 831/476-3918
email: office@ststephenslutheran.org
Web Address: www.ststephenslutheran.org
Office Hours: Mon.—Thurs. 12—5:00 pm

Ministers: The People of St. Stephen's
Pastor: Rev. James P. Lapp
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp
Church Musician: Gary Roberts
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens
Custodian: John Hopping
Videographers: Kent Madsen, Barb Rice, Jay Johnston

Music used by permission Onelicense #A-706539

Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 18, 2022

Welcome to people new to this church or faith, long time Lutherans, and Christians from every tradition. Welcome to all who have no church home, want to follow Christ, have doubts, or do not believe. Welcome to new visitors and old friends. Welcome to people of every age and size, color and culture, sexual orientation and marital status, ability and challenge. Welcome to believers and questioners and questioning believers. This is a place where you are welcome to celebrate and sorrow, rejoice and recover. This is a place where lives are made new. Welcome on this day.

The Gathering

Prelude "We are waiting for Jesus" J. Helgen

Advent Wreath Lighting

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time
That marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.
As we light the candles on this wreath,
Open our eyes to see your presence
In the lowly ones of this earth.
Enlighten us with your grace,
That we may sing of your advent among us
in the Word made flesh.
Grant this through Christ our Lord,
Whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

Amen.

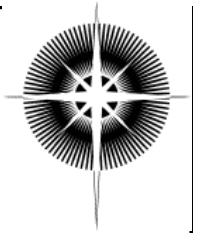
*Opening Hymn

"Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding" Red #246

**1 Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!
"Christ is near," we hear it say.
"Cast away the works of darkness,
all you children of the day!"**

(hymn continued)

Give a Gift. Change a Life.



What better way to celebrate the season of Jesus' birth than to give gifts of comfort and joy to those who are in need. Give meaningful gifts that inspire leadership, nourish the hungry and heal the sick.

Lutheran World Relief

provides gifts that improve the lives of people living in poverty around the world. For example: A Goat not only provides a woman farmer with milk to sell, but also helps her build a herd. Coffee seedlings help a farmer grow a lucrative crop that has the potential to significantly improve income. Seeds help farmers grow more and better crops when climate conditions are challenging. Emergency Water delivers immediate, potable water after disaster strikes. **LWR.org/gifts or 1-800-597-5972**

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

stands ready to welcome the most vulnerable refugees who are seeking safety and hope in America. Our gifts are essential in rebuilding their lives. Gifts from "Basic Needs Kit" to "Ready for Work kit" can mean so much to those who have nothing but the clothes on their backs. **LIRS.org or 877-291-7061**

S.P.I.N. Socks for People in Need (box in narthex)

NEW socks are a blessing for many reasons, especially health, but also because they provide comfort and a sense of dignity. Basic white crew socks are appreciated by everyone. But you may also choose socks for women and children.

The Season of Giving

This holiday season, we thank everyone who has supported St. Stephen's this past year with their time, talent and financial contributions and look forward to support from all of our members in the year ahead.

If you need a convenient way to make regular offerings or if you plan to make an additional gift before the end of the year, we encourage you to check out our electronic giving options. As the pace of life speeds up, especially around the holidays, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions.

For more info. contact Janet Slay 475-5668

Your 2023 Offering envelopes are here, please pick up in the Narthex.

"God uses money to confirm direction."

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight."
Proverbs 3:5-6*

**2 Wakened by the solemn warning,
From earth's bondage let us rise;
Christ, our sun, all sloth dispelling,
Shines upon the morning skies.**

**3 See, the Lamb, so long expected,
comes with pardon down from heav'n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
one and all, to be forgiv'n;**

**4 So, when next he comes in glory
and the world is wrapped in fear,
he will shield us with his mercy
and with words of love draw near.**

**5 Honor, glory, might, dominion
to the Father and the Son
with the everlasting Spirit
while eternal ages run!**

*Greeting

P: The steadfast love of God, the life of Jesus Christ
and the power of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Kyrie "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" # 257 vs. 1 - 2

**O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.**

**REFRAIN
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**O come, O Wisdom from on high
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
Teach us your will and guide our way. REFRAIN**

Hymn of Praise "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" #270 vs 1 & 3

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise;
Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!" **REFRAIN** (next pg.)
REFRAIN
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace!
Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
Born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth **REFRAIN**

*Prayer of the Day

P: May God be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us Pray...

Celebrate, Page 1

The Word of God

First Reading Isaiah 7:10-16 Celebrate pg. 1

L: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading Romans 1:1-7 Celebrate pg. 3



Poinsettias

Help adorn the sanctuary for Christmas Eve! Poinsettias may be donated in honor or in memory of loved ones and will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Call the office. Cost is \$15. Please make the check payable to St. Stephen's, but keep it separate from your regular offering to make bookkeeping easier. You may take your plant home after Sunday, December 25 to enjoy. Proceeds benefit our church ministries.

Advent is a time of hope and longing for the coming of the Messiah. Beginning with the candle on the front left and then moving clockwise, one candle is lit each week. The candles represent the four **themes of Advent: Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace.** The large white candle in the middle of the wreath represents Christ. It is called the "Christ Candle" and is lit on Christmas Eve. In many churches it burns until Epiphany which marks the visit of the Magi. The body of the wreath is made of evergreens that represent eternal life, because they are always green.



This year as in past years, our family **dedicates the Advent Wreath to the memory of my mother Kathryn Lewis Greso who introduced me to using the Advent Wreath to mark the weeks till Christmas when I was a young girl.**

We hope as we light each candle on the wreath, your thoughts will turn inward away from the hustle, bustle, and pressures of today's world, and help you focus your thoughts toward Christ who entered the world that long ago Christmas night.

Faithfully. Barbara Johnston

Holiday Events

Dec. 18 Mitten Tree (gifts/preschoolers)

Dec. 18 MMRR Circle Bake Sale

Dec. 18 Holiday Potluck (after worship)

Dec. 22 Knitter's Party 7:00 pm

Dec. 25 Christmas Day Worship—10 am
With “All That Brass”

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

Sat. Dec. 24th

5:00

&

7:30 pm (with “All That Brass”)

Share the joy with your friends. The 7:30pm livestream and recorded Christmas Eve Service will be available on our website.

www.ststephenslutheran.org

P: Word of God, Word of Life.
C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand as you are able)

Gospel Acclamation

“Angels We Have Heard on High” #289 vs. 1

**Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains**

***G l o r i a . . . in excelsis Deo
G l o r i a . . . in excelsis Deo***

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke
C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Gospel Reading Matthew 1:18-25 Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Gospel of the Lord.
C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon Rev. James Lapp

*Hymn of the Day

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” Red #254

**1. Come, thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art,
Dear desire of ev'ry nation,
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.**

(Hymn continued)

2. Born thy people to deliver,
Born a child, and yet a king;
Born to reign in us forever,
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to thy glorious throne.

*The Prayers of the Church

Celebrate, Page 4

The Communion Meal

*Passing of the Peace

P: May the peace of God be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

Please share a sign of God's Peace with the words:
"Peace be with you."

Offering — We honor and worship God by returning some of
the gifts with which we have been blessed.

Special Music "Filled with Peace and Gratitude"

*Offertory

"O Come, All Ye Faithful" Red #283 vs. 1

**O come, all ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold him
Born the King of angels**

REFRAIN

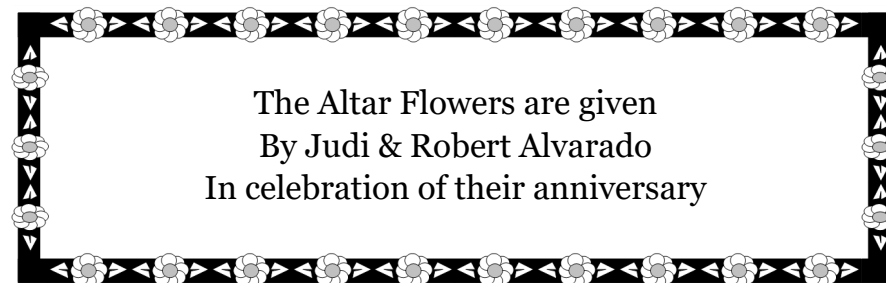
*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Reader: Beth Stiles
Coffee Hour: Potluck & Bakesale



**Ushers needed for Christmas Eve
5:00 & 7:30 pm**

Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM: Craig Dahl, Family of Kurt Bell, Genell Csik, Mike Homa, Mateo, Family of Mark Cronquist, Erica Curry, Rosio, Barbara Stiles, Alessandra, John W., The Family of Connor Kowalski, Shiela P., Mary Smith, Tina G., Paul Cunningham, Family of Tom Dunham, Barbara Allen, Beth Stiles, Anita & Howard, The People of Ukraine, Sydnei Wilbywold, Paul Paustian, Kurt Bell, Will, Deborah Henry, Kathi Chavez, Carla, Ellie, Adrian Cameron, Dawit & Family (Ethiopia), Gaye Cornell, Dorothy, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Kirsten Skiles, Nancy, Marisa & Isaac, Mateo & Lina, Don, Atlas, Margot Wilson, Rose, Will, Sam, Aaron Johnson, Sal, Katarina, Taiyo, Mateo, Stephanie Jager, Parents, Healthcare workers & teachers.

LONG TERM: Kyle Lapp, Shelby Volpi, Ashley, Sandie & Dale, Sanders Family, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi

*Blessing

P: May God direct your ways in peace,
Make you abound in love for one another and for all,
And strengthen your hearts
As we wait for the coming of Christ
Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,
Bless you now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

*Closing Hymn

“The King Shall Come” 260

- 1 **The King shall come when morning dawns
and light triumphant breaks,
when beauty gilds the eastern hills
and life to joy awakes—**
- 2 **Not as of old a little child
to bear, and fight, and die,
but crowned with glory like the sun
that lights the morning sky.**
- 3 **Oh, brighter than the rising morn
when Christ, victorious, rose
and left the lonesome place of death
despite the rage of foes.**
- 4 **Oh, brighter than that glorious morn
shall dawn upon our race.
The day when Christ in splendor comes
and we shall see his face.**
- 5 **The King shall come when morning dawns
and light and beauty brings.
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray:
come quickly, King of kings!**

**O come, let us adore him
O come, let us adore him
O come, let us adore him
Christ the Lord**

*Offering Prayer

P: Savior of the nations, come.
Make your home here in us.
Feed us with your love,
So that our faith shines ever new
And our lives reveal your light.
C: Amen

*Great Thanksgiving

P: May God be with you.
C: And also with you.
P: Lift up your hearts.
C: We lift them to the Lord
P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.
P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy....

*Words of Institution

*Lord's Prayer

**C: 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**

P: Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you.
Share in the feast of salvation.

(You may be seated)

Holy Communion

Guests: You are welcome to come forward to receive Communion as part of this church family! Children are welcome to come forward and receive a special blessing if they have never communed before.

Invitation to Communion

Come to Christ's banquet.
Feast on God's gift of grace.

Lamb of God

"Love Has Come"

Red #292 vs. 1 & 3

**Love has come a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high!**

(hymn continued)

**Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us,
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!**

Communion Hymn

"O God, We Call"

ACS #1075

**O God, we call
O God, we call,
From deep inside we yearn,
From deep inside we yearn,
From deep inside we yearn for you.**

The Sending

*Communion Blessing

P: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
Strengthen you and keep you in God's grace.
C: Amen.

*Prayer after Communion

P: God for whom we wait,
You come to us
In the broken bread and the cup we share.
Make us ready always
To welcome Christ into our hearts,
And send us forth to be your people in the world,
Announcing your coming among us
In Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.