

# John came to testify to the light

JOHN 1:8



# Third Sunday of Advent

## December 17, 2023

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.

Music    “Christmas Fantasy”                      All that Brass & Organ

## The Gathering

### Advent Wreath Lighting

P: We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath  
That marks our days of preparation for Christ’s advent.  
As we light the candles on this wreath,  
Strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord’s coming in glory.  
Enlighten us with your grace,  
That we may serve our neighbors in need.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord,  
Whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.  
**Amen.**

\*Opening Hymn                      *“Prepare the Royal Highway”*    #264

1. Prepare the royal highway;  
The King of kings is near!  
Let ev’ry hill and valley  
A level road appear!  
Then greet the King of Glory,  
Foretold in sacred story:    **REFRAIN**

### **REFRAIN**

**Hosanna to the Lord, For he fulfills God’s Word!**

2. God's people, see him coming:  
Your own eternal king!  
Palm branches strew before him!  
Spread garments! Shout and sing!  
God's promise will not fail you!  
No more shall doubt assail you!    REFRAIN

3. Then fling the gates wide open  
To greet your promised king!  
Your king, yet ev'ry nation  
Its tribute too may bring.  
All lands will bow before him;  
Their voices join your singing:    REFRAIN

4. His is no earthly kingdom;  
It comes from heav'n above.  
His rule is peace and freedom  
And justice, truth, and love.  
So let your praise be sounding  
For kindness so abounding;    REFRAIN

\*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.

(Kyrie continued)

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

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 61:1-4, 8-11

Celebrate pg. 1

L: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Celebrate pg. 3

L: 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 acc. to St. John, the 1st Chapter.

C: **Glory to you, O God.**

\*Gospel Reading

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Celebrate pg. 3

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

Sermon

Rev. James Lapp

\*Hymn of the Day

“On Jordan’s Banks the Baptist’s Cry” #249

1. On Jordan’s banks the Baptist’s cry  
Announces that the Lord is nigh;  
Awake and hearken, for he brings  
Glad tidings of the King of kings!
2. Then cleansed be ev’ry life from sin;  
Make straight the way for God within,  
And let us all our hearts prepare  
For Christ to come and enter there.
3. We hail you as our Savior, Lord,  
Our refuge and our great reward;  
Without your grace we waste away  
Like flow’rs that wither and decay.
4. Stretch forth your hand, our health restore,  
And make us rise to fall no more;  
Oh, let your face upon us shine  
And fill the world with love divine.
5. All praise to you, eternal Son,  
Whose advent has our freedom won,  
Whom with the Father we adore,  
And Holy Spirit, evermore.

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.**

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

Music                      Good News Singers  
    "The Trumpet Sound" Granham Kendrick, 1950

## 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*

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! The wine is red. The grape  
juice is white. Children are always welcome to come forward and  
receive a special blessing if they have never communed before.*



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!

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 *"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"*  
#815

I want to walk as a child of the light.  
I want to follow Jesus.  
God set the stars to give light to the world.  
The star of my life... is Jesus.                      REFRAIN

REFRAIN  
In him there is no darkness at all.  
The night and the day are both alike.  
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.  
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

I want to see... the brightness of God.  
I want to look at Jesus.  
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path,  
And show me the way to the Father.    REFRAIN

I'm looking for... the coming of Christ.  
I want to be with Jesus.  
When we have run.... With patience the race,  
We shall know the joy... of Jesus.                      REFRAIN

# 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.**

## \*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      *"Hark, the Glad Sound!"*      #239

Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes,  
The Savior promised long;  
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne  
And ev'ry voice a song.

He comes the pris'ners to release,  
In Satan's bondage held.  
The gates of brass before him burst,  
The iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind,  
The bleeding soul to cure,  
And with the treasures of his grace  
To enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,  
Your welcome shall proclaim,  
And heav'n's eternal arches ring  
With your beloved name.

\*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Music            “Ode to Joy” Beethoven, German composer

Flowers — Robert & Judi Alvarado

in Celebration of their 28 wedding anniversary

Reader — Mark Linder

Coffee Host — ?

## Prayer Concerns

**SHORT TERM:** Anne Rice, Cheryl Davis, Sue, Lindsay Rosenberg, Middle East Peace, Maria, Cody Turner, Jan, Jacque N. Diane Strong, Family of Jean Patterson, San Diego families of Nancy & Sam, Renee, Brandon, Tom Dawson, Rena Brown, James, Tina, Lurline Moore, Keith, Taiyo, Marissa, Isaac, James Boudreau, Alvarado family, Dustin, Eric Utto-Galarneau, Father Jack Davis, Corcoran family, Keith, Mike Homer, Sam, Atlas, Tony, Sandi Csik, Janica Paustian, Amy Wimmer, Gray, Hailey, Jesse, Joyce, James, John, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Allen, Kathy, Joel Hurttgam, Sandy, Levi & Alexandria, Gary Toops, Donna Kemper, Lisa & Beau, Craig Dahl, Genell Csik, Paul Cunningham, Paul Paustian, Dawit & Family (Ethiopia), Gaye Cornell, Dorothy, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Nancy, Mateo & Lina, Don, Atlas, Anthony, Steve, Margot Wilson, Rose, Will, Aaron Johnson, Sal, Katarina, Stephanie Jager, Parents, Healthcare workers & teachers.

**LONG TERM:** Biergiel—Colclough family, April McCalmont, Marty Nehring, Miller Mouw, Kyle Lapp, Shelby Volpi, Ashley, Frank, Joe, Dom, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, Bobbie Erickson, Joyce, Susan Anderson, Jan Wagner, Richard C., Brouse Family,

## ADVENT WREATH



The wreath is given to the Glory of God and in memory of Barbara's mother, Kathryn Greso who long ago taught her the meaning of the Advent Wreath and to her old friend Sibbi who taught her how to tie the greens into a wreath.

**Dec. 24 Sunday Morning Worship—10 am**



**Christmas Eve  
Candlelight Worship  
Sun. Dec. 24th - 7:00 pm**

Invite someone to come with you as we celebrate God's love for the world in a newborn baby! This season is a time when folks may be needing to feel more included and connected with other loving people at a home church. So let's extend that welcome!

<sup>12</sup>Livestream & recorded

# Music at St. Stephen's

Advent is here!



Join the Music Team 2024! Hey friends, there is music in the air, can't you just feel those harmonic progression and intervals, bursting all around you. We all like music, and appreciate our gifts. Why not share with our church family and join the music team? If you teach an instrument or voice, please let me know. There is always room for more celebration through music.

*It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness & thus open doors of JOY*

All That Brass! Thank you players: Rawly Capone, Anthony Plaza, and Adonay Gonzalez.

Good News Singers (GNS) will sing for us during Advent. Thank you Janet, Tina, Bill, Margaret, Kirstin, Jeanette & Pr. Jim.

Thank you to Miss Julia Tracy for her rendition of The First Noel.

Please donate to the "Musicians Fund" to enhance our worship together. Yours in Christ & Mission, Gary.

~ PEACE THROUGH JOY ~



## 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, 7pm service to enjoy. Benefit our church ministries.





## 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

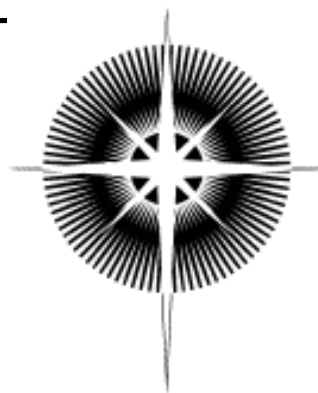
Your 2024 Offering envelopes are here, if you'd like to stop by and pick them up.

**"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*

## **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. Sponsored by the Association of Faith Communities.

Worship livestream online at [www.ststephenslutheran.org](http://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."

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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

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