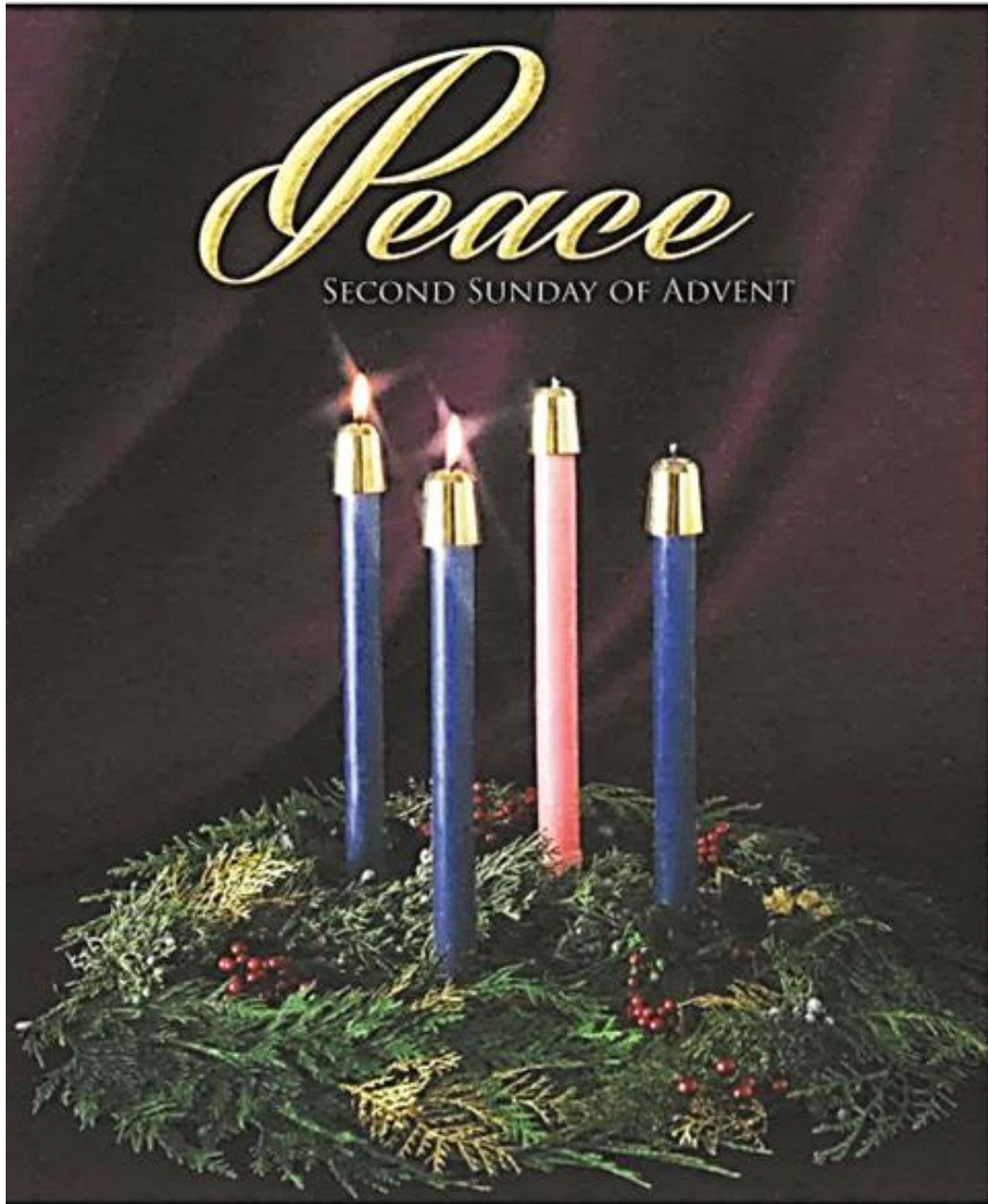


ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



DECEMBER 8, 2024

10 A.M.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
(850) 385-2728, Office
sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com, Email
<http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com>
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor
Katharine Gossman, Music Director
Lori Zengel, Office Manager
All Members, Ministers

Welcome, Everyone!

We are glad to have you with us this morning. If you need assistance in finding anything, one of our ushers will be glad to help you.

Restrooms are found in the fellowship hall and office building to the right as you exit the sanctuary. Proceed up the stairs and through the glass door. Unisex bathrooms are available through the kitchen in the office area. Please do not leave children under 12 unattended.

“Let the Little Children Come” Matthew 19:14 - In accordance with St. Stephen’s mission “to be a welcoming community . . .” we encourage all ages to worship on Sundays. We also believe that children learn to welcome others by how they have been welcomed. If you are a parent of a young child, know that this community supports your efforts to engage your child in worship and understands that it can be a stressful process. Having children in worship is a joy that we treasure, so please know that we welcome you and your children as they learn to become active members in Christ’s body. A nursery is available if parent or guardian desires. See usher for details.

Please remember to turn off your cell phone during the liturgy.

All the hymns for the worship service are in the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship book and numbered by hymn, not page.

For safety we no longer pass the offering plate. Financial gifts can be placed in the plate by the baptismal font.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church (ELCA) is a Reconciling in Christ congregation that explicitly welcomes people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. St. Stephen is equally committed to anti-racism. We welcome people without regard to race, ethnicity, age, family status, economic status, or differing abilities.

All are invited to receive the sacrament. Lutherans believe that Jesus Christ is present in, with and under the consecrated bread and wine of Holy Communion. Those not wishing to commune are welcome to the altar to receive a blessing. To indicate this, please cross your arms over your chest. If you are not able to come forward, please inform the ushers and the meal will be brought to you.

INTRODUCTION

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

PRELUDE

The assembly stands.



+ GATHERING +

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, alive in the world, reviving creation,
arriving soon.

C **Amen.**

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence for reflection.

P God of mercy,

C **we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human
authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

P God of might,

C **we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors.
We have trusted false promises.**

P God in our midst,

C **we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to
birth in us.**

P A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through ✝ Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

GATHERING HYMN 264 *Prepare the Royal Highway*



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
 2 God's peo - ple, sec him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
 Palm branch-es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
 Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
 His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
 God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
 All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
 So let your praise be sound-ing for kind-ness so a - bound - ing:



Refrain
 Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

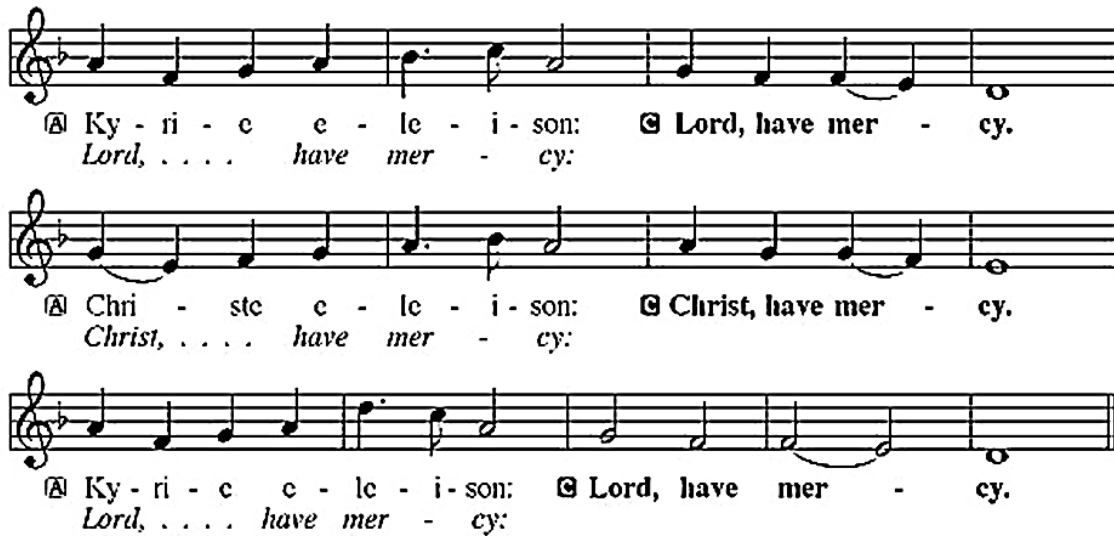
Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; in *Lutheran Book of Worship*
 Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.
 Text © 1974 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, adroit, Augsburg Fortress.

GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

KYRIE



Ⓐ Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: Ⓢ Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:

Ⓐ Chri - ste e - le - i - son: Ⓢ Christ, have mer - cy.
Christ, have mer - cy:

Ⓐ Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: Ⓢ Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:



PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

Ososǒ, ososǒ

O - so - sǒ o - so - sǒ, pyong - hwa - ŭi - im - gŭm

1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
 2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
 3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
 4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.

u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sǒ.

Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope

Music: OSOSŎ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947

Text and music © Geonyong Lee.

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME



+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means “my messenger”) will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God’s people, as silver and gold are refined.

¹ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Luke 1:68-79

We sing the psalm responsively.



Leader ⁶⁸ Blessed are you, Lord, the ¹ God of Israel,
you have come to your people and ¹ set them free.

**C ⁶⁹ You have raised up for us a ¹ mighty Savior,
born of the house of your ¹ servant David.**

L ⁷⁰ Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us ¹ from our enemies,
⁷¹ from the hands of ¹ all who hate us,

C ⁷² to show mercy [|] to our forebears,
and to remember your [|] holy covenant.

L ⁷³ This was the oath you swore to our [|] father Abraham:
⁷⁴ to set us free from the hands of our [|] enemies,

C free to worship you [|] without fear,
⁷⁵ holy and righteous before you, all the days [|] of our life.

L ⁷⁶ And you, child, shall be called the prophet of [|] the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to pre- [|] pare the way,

C ⁷⁷ to give God's people knowledge [|] of salvation
by the forgiveness [|] of their sins.

L ⁷⁸ In the tender compassion [|] of our God
the dawn from on high shall [|] break upon us,

C ⁷⁹ to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shad- [|] ow of death,
and to guide our feet into the [|] way of peace.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

Amen.

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11

The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

³ I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴ constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵ because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰ to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹ having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

R The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by “repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

P The holy gospel according to Luke, the third chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

³ He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the

forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON *We encounter the living word of God in the preaching.*

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY **ACS 904** *Come to Be Our Hope, O Jesus*



Spanish: 1 *Tú,* Je - sús, nues - tra es - pe - ran - za, ven y
 2 *Vén,* y te - je, un mun - do nue - vo ca - mi -
English: 1 Come to be our hope, O Je - sus, come to
 2 Come to build your new cre - a - tion through the



ti - bra nues - tro ser, Ni - ño,
 nan - da en la ver - dad, pa - ra
 set your peo - ple free. From op -
 road of ser - vant - hood; give new



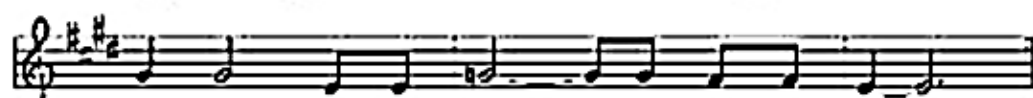
na - ce, en - tre na - so - tros, ven y da - nos tu po -
 que, por fin, el pue - blo vi - va, en ple - na li - ber -
 pres - sion, come, re - lease us, grant us your true lib - er -
 life to ev - 'ry na - tion, chang - ing e - vil in - to



der, Vén li - ber - ta - pri - sio - ne - ros de, in - jus -
 nad. Vén, Je - sús, a - bre, el fu - tu - ro de tu
 ty. Come, re - lease from ev - 'ry pris - on those who
 good. Come and o - pen our to - mor - row for your



ti - clay a - flie - ción; ven, re - ú - ne nues - tros
 rei - no de, a - le - grí - a. Vén, de - rum - ba, es - te gran
 suf - fer in our land. In your love we find the
 joy - ful reign so near. Take a - way all hu - man



pue - blos en a - mor y, en com - pren - sión.
 mu - ro que hay se - pa - ra no - che, y al - a.
 rea - son still to live and un - der - stand.
 sor - row; give us hope a - gainst our fear.

APOSTLES' CREED

A Let us confess our faith.

C 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 INTERCESSION

Each petition ends: Lord, in your mercy,

Congregational response: receive our prayer.

PEACE

A The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

We greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

The assembly is seated.



+ MEAL +

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

ANTHEM “My Soul in Stillness Waits”- Haugen

(Refrain)

For you, oh Lord, my soul and stillness waits,
truly my hope is in you.

Oh, Lord of Light, our only hope of glory,
your radiance shines in all who look to you,
come, light the hearts of all in dark and shadow.
Oh, Spring of Joy, rain down upon our spirits,
our thirsty hearts are yearning for your Word,
come, make us whole, be comfort to our hearts.
Oh, root of life, implant your seed within us,
and in your advent, draw us all to you,
our hope reborn in dying and in rising. (Refrain)

O Key of Knowledge, guide us in our pilgrimage,
we ever seek, yet unfulfilled remain,
open to us the pathway of your peace.
Come, let us bow before the God who made us,
let every heart be opened to the Lord,
for we are all the people of his hand.
Here we shall meet the Maker of the heavens,
Creator of the mountains and the seas,
Lord of the stars, and present to us now. (Refrain)

OFFERING HYMN

Let the Vineyards be Fruitful Lord



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were
sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath - er the hopes and dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence,
Lord, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord 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 our thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.
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. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The presiding minister continues to give thanks.

P In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread,
and gave thanks; broke it,
and gave it to his disciples,
saying: Take and eat;
this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

C **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.

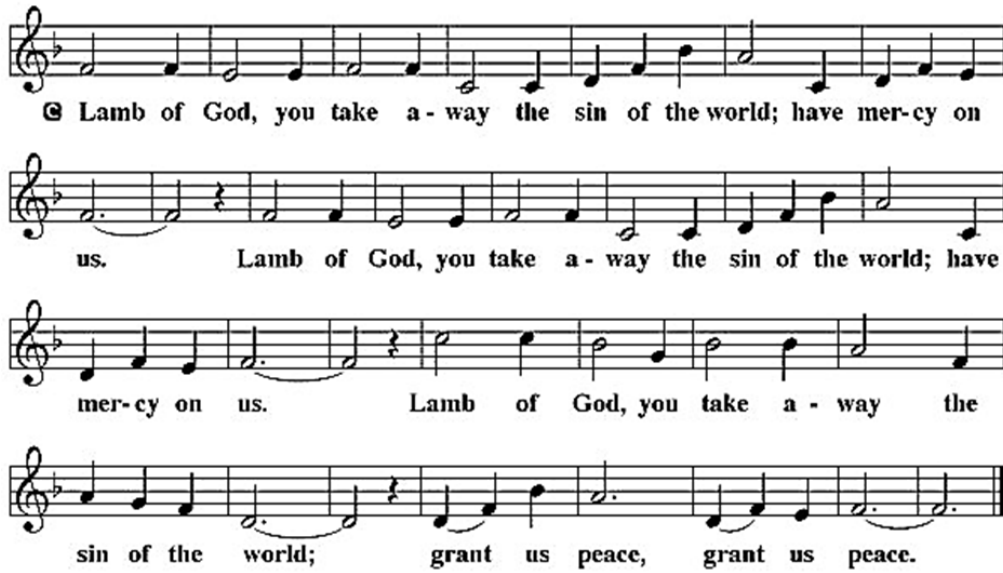
C **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

The assembly is seated.

LAMB OF GOD



DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

As the ushers direct you, come to the altar using the side aisles and return to your seat via the central aisle. The assisting ministers offer both wine and grape juice from the pouring cup, take one from the tray as you approach the rail. Leave the empty glass on the rail. Wheat-free wafers are available--simply tell the pastor.

Communion Hymns	256	<i>Comfort, Comfort Now My People</i>
	254	<i>Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus</i>

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name.

C Amen.

+ SENDING +

BLESSING *We receive the blessings of the triune God.*

P God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope
 for the journey, ✠ bless and keep you now and forever.

C **Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly stands.

SENDING HYMN **249** *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*

1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounce - es
 2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
 5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent

that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
 way for God with - in, and let us all our
 and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
 rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
 has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther

for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite
 Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

DISMISSAL

A We believe out loud that God's mission for us is:

C to be an active community that welcomes all people to nurture and share their faith and gifts with everyone, according to God's call.

A Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

C Thanks be to God!

+ + +

Sundays and Seasons v.20220805.1416

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Today's altar flowers celebrate the
62nd wedding anniversary
of Jan and Jerry Harrison.

Calendar for December 8 - 15

Dec.	8 Sun.	9 am	Book study
		9:30 am	Choir practice
		10 am	Worship, Second Sunday of Advent
	11 Wed.	7 pm	Choir practice
	14 Sat.	10:30 am	Decorating the Sanctuary
15 Sun.		9 am	Book study
		9:30 am	Choir practice
		10 am	Worship, Third Sunday of Advent/Children's program
		11:30 am	Potluck and Congregational picture

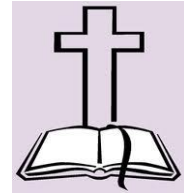
Next Sunday's Readings, Third Sunday of Advent:

[Zephaniah 3:14-20](#)

[Isaiah 12:2-6](#)

[Philippians 4:4-7](#)

[Luke 3:7-18](#)



SERVING EVERY SUNDAY

Pastor Tom, presiding and preaching

Katharine Gossman, piano

Karl Barton, flute

Denise Bookwalter, announcements

Choir: Karl Barton, Melissa Barton, Mark Canning, Judi Duffy, Kirsten Ebbesen, Rita Ford, Rudy Hehn, Susan Hehn, Colleen Holdcraft, Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Olivia James, Sandy Ness, Simone Schuster, Dave Suhrweir, Cassandra White

SERVING TODAY AND ONE WEEK FROM TODAY

Serving	Dec. 8	Dec. 15
Assisting Minister	Rob Schiffer	Colleen Holdcraft
Cup Minister	Rita Ford	Susan Warren
Cantor	Simone Schuster	
Lector	Mark Bertolami	Jen Reece
Acolyte	Ceilia Greeley or Graham Reece or Bastian Stover	
Tech Team	Colin Hackley Sylvia Smith	Mark Greeley Audrey Post
Ushers	Patrick Kennell Lawana Lamb-Daniels	Jan Harrison Lawana Lamb-Daniels
Altar Guild	Linda Eshleman Barbara Sullivan	Beth Alexander
Counters	Patricia Handschy Loraine Sundberg	Kirsten Ebbesen Rob Schiffer

PRAYER REQUESTS

New concerns: Donna Dickson Miller (friend of Audrey Post), facing health challenges; Wayne McCully (friend of Audrey Post), undergoing dialysis for kidney failure; Gladys Kane for continued healing.

For the sick: Sallie Robinson (wife of Erik Robinson); Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White); Laura McDuffie (sister of Rob Schiffer).

In treatment for cancer: Ruth Hartung; Scott Simmons (son of Sharon Simmons); Gordon Fleischer; Stephanie Barber; Jim Saxman (uncle of Rob Schiffer); Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; James Sablan (brother of Donna Schiffer); Craig Timm (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Gil Johnson (friend of Judi Duffy); Amanda George (daughter-in-law of Rob Schiffer); David McManus (friend of Audrey Post); Shannon Miller (friend of Barb ODonnell); Becky Graves (friend of Ridy Hofer); Timothy Stewart (son of Pepper Stewart).

Health and protection: For all affected by the coronavirus – especially those experiencing mental-health difficulties due to isolation, those struggling to recover from the disease, those on the front lines fighting, researching and treating the disease (doctors, nurses, medical personnel, EMTs), the millions of unemployed people, etc.; for the unaccompanied children entering the U.S., including those “unaccounted for.”

For prisoners: All those on Death Row.

Other concerns: For Karen Olson; Kevin Robinson (son of Erik Robinson), in need of encouragement; Isaac (son of Terri Schmitt), for physical and emotional healing; Steve Michael (cousin of Rob Schiffer), in rehab after a serious accident.

Church concerns: St. Stephen’s Church Council; the Florida-Bahamas Synod Council; all congregations searching for ways to stay connected and proclaim the Good News; Reconciling Works; Grace Lutheran Church; Bishop Pedro Suarez; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Pensacola.

World concerns: For all people suffering and/or recovering from hurricanes; migrants and asylum seekers; civil rights for people around the world; a ceasefire in Ethiopia and in Ukraine; peace in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS: We'll be decorating the chancel area with poinsettias for Christmas. Would you like to dedicate one (or more)? The cost is \$10, and the dedication list will be in the Dec. 15th and 22nd bulletins. Just fill out the form in the narthex and place it with your payment in the offering plate, or email Lori with the information. The deadline is Sunday, Dec. 8.

PLEDGE DRIVE: We are collecting pledge cards for 2025. Please prayerfully consider your planned contributions for the ministry of St. Stephen. The estimate of giving is vital information for our Church Council to begin preparing our budget. Our planned gifts are also vital to our own spiritual development and maturity. Thank you in advance for your generous stewardship and trust in God's mercy. *(Cards are in the narthex and can be dropped in the collection plate. You also have the option of pledging directly to Lori via email or phone.)*

FLOWER CHART FOR 2024: Do you have an anniversary, birthday or special memory you would like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service by signing up for the 2024 Flower Chart located in the narthex. The cost is \$40, and you can place it in the offering plate.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: Want to read a sermon you missed? Visit <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>. Want to read the latest newsletters? Go to <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>. Want to browse a collection of St. Stephen songs? They're at <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>.