ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



NOVEMBER 30, 2025 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

Rita Ford, 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

The new church year begins with a wake-up call: Christ is coming soon! In today's readings both Paul and Jesus challenge us to wake from sleep, for we know neither the day nor hour of the Lord's coming. Isaiah proclaims the day when God will gather all people on the holy mountain and there will be no more war or suffering. Though we vigilantly watch for the promised day of salvation, we wait for what we already have: Christ comes among us this day as the word and meal that strengthens our faith in the promises of God.

WELCOME

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.

Pastor: Blessed be the holy Trinity, \pm one God, whose home is heaven and earth,

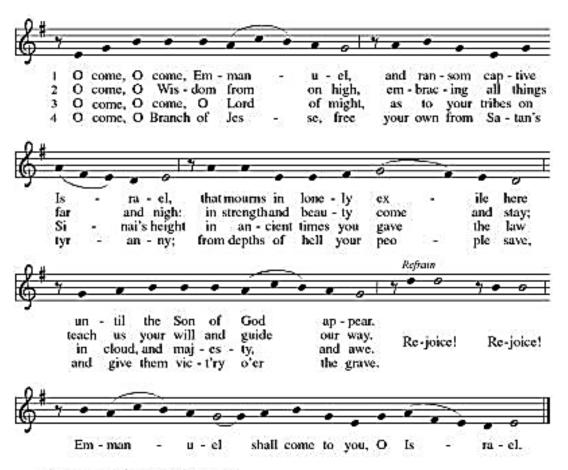
whose salvation is sure.

Congregation: Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

- P Long-expected God,
- C we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.
- P God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. 4 You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.
- C Amen.

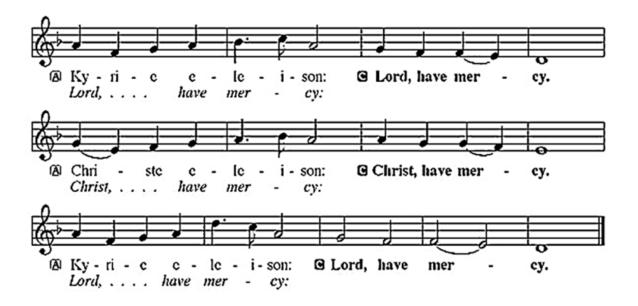


- 5 O come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home; make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. Refrain
- 6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight. Refrain
- 7 O come, O King of nations, come, O Cornerstone that binds in one: refresh the hearts that long for you; restore the broken, make us new. Refrain
- 8 O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. Refrain

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



PRAYER OF THE DAY



P Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH ELW 247 (vs. 1)



Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope Music: OSOSÓ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947 Text and music & Geonyong Lee.

CHILDREN'S TIME



+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Isaiah 2:1-5

The visionary message presented in this reading focuses on a future day when God establishes a universal reign of peace. Divine decisions will make war obsolete, and the worshiping community responds: "Let us walk in the light of that Lord now!"

¹ The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ² In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. ³ Many peoples shall come and

say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. ⁴He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. ⁵O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

Reader The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 122 We sing the psalm responsively.



Leader ¹I was glad when they [|] said to me, "Let us go to the house [|] of the Lord."

- C 2 Now our | feet are standing within your gates, | O Jerusalem.
- L ³ Jerusalem is built | as a city that is at unity | with itself;
- C ⁴ to which the tribes go up, the tribes | of the Lord, the assembly of Israel, to praise the name | of the Lord.
- L ⁵ For there are the | thrones of judgment, the thrones of the | house of David.
- C ⁶ Pray for the peace | of Jerusalem: "May they pros- | per who love you.
- L ⁷ Peace be with- | in your walls and quietness with- | in your towers.
- C ⁸ For the sake of my kindred | and companions, I pray for | your prosperity.
- L ⁹Because of the house of the ¹Lord our God, I will seek to ¹do you good."

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

Amen.

SECOND READING Romans 13:11-14

Paul compares the advent of Christ to the coming of dawn. We live our lives today in light of Christ's coming in the future.

¹¹ Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹² the night is far gone; the day is near. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³ let us walk decently as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in illicit sex and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

- R The Word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Matthew 24:36-44

Jesus describes his second coming as a sudden, turbulent event that will bring about deep change to our normal, day-to-day lives. Therefore, he urges people to stay awake, be aware, and wait expectantly, because the Son of Man will come unannounced.

P The holy gospel according to Matthew, the twenty - fourth chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples,] ³⁶ "About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so, too, will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two will be in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken, and one will be left. ⁴² Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

- 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.



Português: 1 Vem, Jesus, nossa esperança, nossas vidas libertar. Vem, nascer em nós, criança, vem o teu poder nos dar. Vem, liberta os prisioneiros da injustiça e da aflição; vem, reúne os forasteiros em amor e em compreensão.

2 Vem secer um mundo novo nos caminhos da verdade; para que, afinal, o povo viva em plena liberdade. Vem, Jesus, abre o futuro do teu reino de alegria. Vem, derruba o imenso muro que separa a noite e o dia.

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: God of grace,

Congregational response: hear our prayer.

PEACE

- P 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.



Stephen Saint

@Stephen-Saint



venmo

Use this QR Code To connect to Venmo for a donation to St. Stephen. Code 5469

OFFERING

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

ANTHEM "He Will Come" - Bell

110 W iii Come Beii

He will come when we're least expecting him, when the world is unprepared as if orphaned from its destiny, as if no creator cared. Though for us, it's out of season, God decides the place and time.

He will come when we're least expecting him, when agendas have been set, and the deadlines have been finalized through which needs are seldom met. Though for us, it's out of season, God decides the place and time.

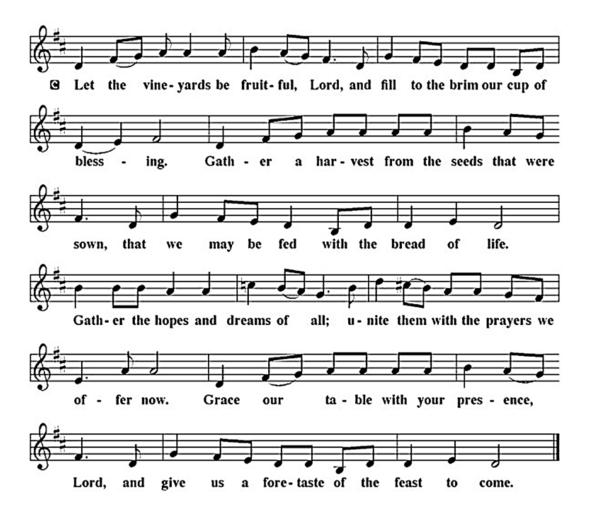
He will come when we're least expecting him, not to parliament or queen, nor to government or treasury, blessing what has always been.

Though for us, it's out of season,

God decides the place and time.

Yes, he'll come and he'll be expecting us to accept his call to dine, where the guests are God's assortment and the food is bread and wine. Christ shall come in the proper season, take his place and claim his time.

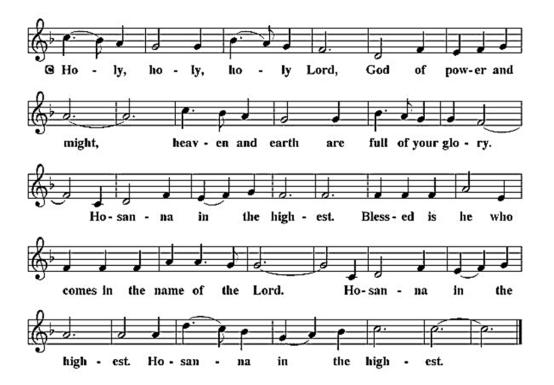
The assembly stands to sing the offering hymn as the collection and the gifts are brought forward.



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; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. 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



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.
- 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 Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

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 pouring cups. Take a communion glass from one of the trays at the corners as you approach the rail. Leave the empty glass on the lower rail. Wheat-free wafers are available -- simply tell the pastor. If you do not wish to receive the meal, simply fold your arms over your chest to receive a blessing from the pastor.

COMMUNION HYMNS 245 Creator of the Stars at Night

260 The King Shall Come

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

1 14411	ERM TER COMMENTON
A	Let us pray.
	God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.
С	Amen.
	+ SENDING +
BLESS	SING We receive the blessings of the triune God.
P	May God who comes among us, Father, & Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always
С	Amen.
The asse	embly is seated.
ANNO	DUNCEMENTS
The asse	embly stands.

244



Test: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660-1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1623-1907 Music: HAF TRONES LAMPA FARDIG, Swedish folk tune

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. Keep awake.
- C Thanks be to God!

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Bob and Linda Eshleman dedicate today's altar flowers to the glory of God in recognition of what Bob calls his upcoming "fourth 21st birthday."

Calendar for November 30 – December 7					
30	Sun.	9:00 am	Bible study		
		9:30 am	Choir practice		
		10:00 am	Worship, First Sunday in Advent		
Dec 3	Wed.	7:00 pm	Choir practice		
Dec 7	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study		
		9:30 am	Choir practice		
		10:00 am	Worship, Second Sunday in Advent		

Next Sunday's Readings, Second Sunday in Advent:

<u>Isaiah 11:1-10</u> <u>Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19</u> <u>Romans 15:4-13</u> Matthew 3:1-12



SERVING EVERY SUNDAY

Pastor Tom, presiding and preaching

Katharine Gossman, piano

Karl Barton, flute

Denise Bookwalter, announcements

Choir: Jordi Banitt, Karl Barton, Melissa Barton, Mark Canning, Kirsten Ebbesen, Rita Ford, Rudy Hehn, Susan Hehn, Colleen Holdcraft, Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Olivia James, Lawana Lamb-Daniels, Sandy Ness, Simone Schuster, Dave Suhrweir, Cassandra White

SERVING TODAY AND ONE WEEK FROM TODAY						
Serving	November 30	December 7				
Assisting Minister	Beth Alexander	Colleen Holdcraft				
Cup Minister	Susan Warren	Beth Alexander				
Cantor	Rudy Hehn					
Lector	Chris/ Elliot Reece	Erik Robinson				
Acolyte	Ceilia Greeley or Graham Reece or Bastian Stover					
Tech Team	Loraine Sundberg Audrey Post	Colin Hackley Cindy Suhrweir				
Ushers	Jan Harrison Patrick Kennell	Bob Eshleman Audrey Post				
Altar Guild	Beth Alexander Linda Eshleman	Sandy Lamb-Daniels Lawana Lamb-Daniels				
Counters	Patricia Handschy Marilyn Larson	Margaret Bowers Susan Warren				

PRAYER REQUESTS

For the sick: Sallie Robinson (wife of Erik Robinson); 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; Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; Craig Timm (friend of Cheryl & Steve); David McManus (friend of Audrey Post); Shannon Miller (friend of Barb O'Donnell); Wayne Harrison (Jan Harrison's Son); Pat Yeager (sister of Sue Canning).

Health and protection: For those encountering fear & uncertainty around government cuts and the future of Medicaid. For immigrants and refugees who are working and raising families in the United States to be safe and secure without unnecessary deportations.

For prisoners: All those on Death Row.

Other concerns: For Hingst/ Mongomery family and friends following the death of Ann; For Karen Olson; Kevin Robinson (son of Erik Robinson), in need of encouragement; Isaac (son of Terri Schmitt), for physical and emotional healing; Margarete Deckert (mother of Caroline Collins), ongoing prayers for strength as she is recovering from illness; Donna Dickson Miller (friend of Audrey Post), facing health challenges; Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart), Donna Schiffer for the passing of her sister; Rocky Bevis (Margaret Bowers' boss); Allana Lochan-Tekaram (sister of Anita Sawh and Rita Ford), for hormone imbalance; Walt Steinvorth (friend of Rob Schiffer), suffering from pericarditis and vestibular neuritis and learning to cope with dizziness and severe equilibrium problems; Fatima Zaid Paul and family, mourning the death of her nephew, MarKus;

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; Bishops Pedro Suarez and Yehiel Curry; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry.

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 Gaza and the Middle East.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FLOWER CHART FOR 2025: 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 2025 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/sermons*. 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/songs-of-st-stephen*.

CHURCH COUNCIL					
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Treasurer, Jennifer Dritt	Buildings Coordinator, Sandy Lamb-Daniels				
Worship & Music, Susan Hehn	Grounds Coordinator, Rob Schiffer				
Care & Hospitality, Lawana Lamb-Daniels	Outreach, Sharon Simmons				
Mutual Ministry, Sylvia Smith	Education & Discipleship, Emily Stover				
Communications, Audrey Post	Youth, Graham Reece				