ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



DECEMBER 7, 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.

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

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

WELCOME

PRELUDE

The assembly stands.



+ Gathering +

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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, + 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.

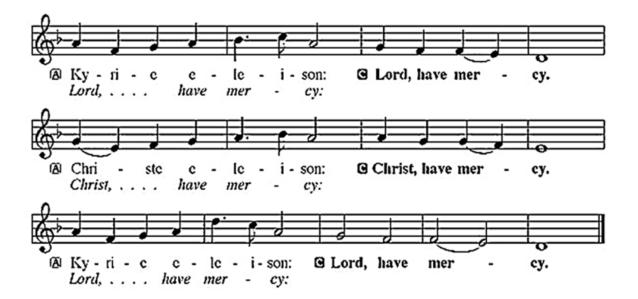


Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Practorius, 1571-1621

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.

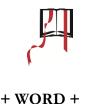
C Amen.



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

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME



FIRST READING: Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David's royal line (the stump of Jesse). Gifted by the spirit of God, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peaceful coexistence.

¹A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ² The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. ³ His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins. ⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 We sing the psalm responsively.



Leader ¹ Give the king your jus- ¹ tice, O God, and your righteousness to ¹ the king's son;

- C ² that he may rule your | people righteously and the | poor with justice;
- L ³ that the mountains may bring prosperity | to the people, and the | hills, in righteousness.
- C Let him defend the needy a- mong the people, rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.
- L ⁵ May he live as long as the sun and ¹ moon endure, from one generation ¹ to another.
- C 6 Let him come down like rain upon 1 the mown field, like showers that wa-1 ter the earth.
- L ⁷ In his time may the ¹ righteous flourish; and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall ¹ be no more.
- C 18 Blessed are you, Lord God, the God of Israel; you alone do wondrous deeds!
- L ¹⁹ And blessed be your glorious | name forever, and may all the earth be filled with your glory. A- | men. Amen.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

Amen.

SECOND READING Romans 15:4-13

God's promise to include Gentiles within the circle of God's blessed people has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christians live out their unity by welcoming and encouraging each other just as Christ has welcomed them into God's family.

⁴ Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹ and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles and sing praises to your name"; ¹⁰ and again he says, "Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people"; ¹¹ and again, "Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; ¹² and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the gentiles; in him the gentiles shall hope." ¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Matthew 3:1-12

Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.

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

C Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight." "A Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our ancestor, for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

- 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.



Text: Johann G. Oleanius, 1635-1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt. Music: FREU DICH SEHR, Trente quatre pseumes de David, Geneva, 1551

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 gathered for the mission of the church, including caring for those in need. We welcome you to place your gift in the offering plate near the baptismal font, mail it to the church, or by using the VENMO QR Code to the right.

ANTHEM

"Again We Find Our Way" -Davisson/arr. Keesecker

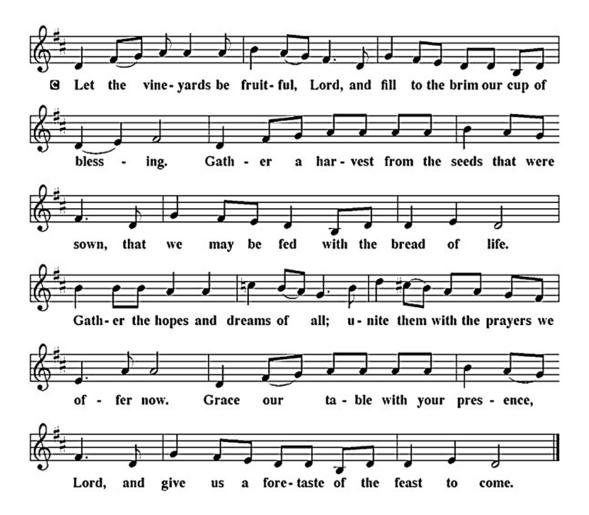
Again we find our way while stars like candles glow and flicker in the night's cold sweep across the fields of snow.

What leads us to this place so still and far from home, compels each step through winter depths familiar yet unknown?

Beyond the village gate, a journey's end at last while in this quiet moment lies the future and the past.

The wonder of this night with joy we find, once more, Emmanuel in swaddling clothes, the open stable door. Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Again we find our way to you.

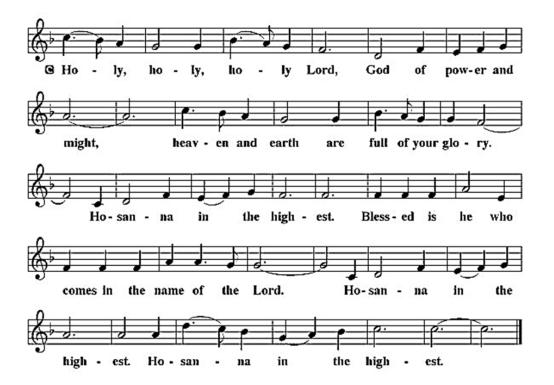
The assembly stands to sing the offering hymn as the collection and the gifts are brought forward.



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

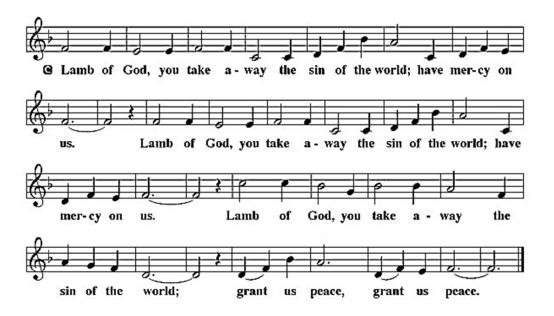
- P Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.
- Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver 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 (first) and grape juice (second) 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.

COMMUNION HYMNS 711 O Day of Peace

262 *Wait For the Lord*

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly stands.

+ SENDING +

BLESSING 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.
- C Amen.

726



Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953 Music: TEMPLE OF PEACE, William P. Rowan, b. 1951 Text © 2002 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638, www.gianusic.com, 800.442.3358.

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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Today's altar flowers celebrate Jan and Jerry Harrison's wedding anniversary -- it's 63 years!

Calendar for December 7 – December 14			
Dec 7 Sun.	9:00 am 9:30 am 10:00 am	Bible study Choir practice Worship, Second Sunday in Advent	
Dec 10 Wed.	7:00 pm	Choir practice	
Dec 14 Sun.	9:00 am 9:30 am 10:00 am	Book study Choir practice Worship, Third Sunday in Advent	

Next Sunday's Readings, Third Sunday in Advent:

Isaiah 35:1-10 Psalm 146:5-10 James 5:7-10 Matthew 11:2-11



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	December 7	December 14		
Assisting Minister	Colleen Holdcraft	Beth Alexander		
Cup Minister	Audrey Post	Loraine Sunberg		
Cantor	Pastor Tom	Karl Barton		
Lector	Erik Robinson	Graham Reese		
Acolyte	Ceilia Greeley or Graham Reece or Bastian Stover			
Tech Team	Colin Hackley Cindy Suhrweir	Mark Greeley Caroline Collins		
Ushers	Bob Eshleman Audrey Post	Ann Del Rossi Bob Eshleman		
Altar Guild	Sandy Lamb-Daniels Lawana Lamb-Daniels	Susan Warren Rita Ford		
Counters	Margaret Bowers Susan Warren	Billie Reardon Loraine Sundberg		

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; Linda Bobbitt, (friend of Cheryl Stuart) diagnosed with metasticized breast cancer.; 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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Worship & Music, Susan Hehn	Grounds Coordinator, Rob Schiffer
Care & Hospitality, Lawana Lamb-Daniels	Outreach, Sharon Simmons
Mutual Ministry, Sylvia Smith	Education & Discipleship, Emily Stover
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