

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

One of 13,000 Stephen Ministry Congregations Around the World



December 17, 2023

For Your Prayers –December 18-24, 2023

Lectionary readings for this week:

Monday: 1 Kings 18:1-18 Ephesians 6:10-17 Psalm 125

Tuesday: 2 Kings 2:9-22 Acts 3:17—4:4 Psalm 125

Wednesday: Malachi 3:16—4:6 Mark 9:9-13 Psalm 125

Thursday: 2 Samuel 6:1-11 Hebrews 1:1-14 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Friday 2 Samuel 6:12-19 Hebrews 1:5-14 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 *Saturday*: Judges 13:2-24 John 7:40-52 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Next Sunday's Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Luke 1:46b-55 (52) or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 (1) Romans 16:25-27 Luke 1:26-38

<u>Join your prayers for healing</u> with God's desires for Aaren Battle, Ed Brown, Kristin Carter, Jack Harris, Sharon Jacobs, Marilyn Johnson, Evelyn Kernan, David Maris, Jim Mayfield, Carole Meyer, Marie Nelson, and Linda Reuben.

<u>Join us in celebration</u> of Arnie and Pat Janot for <u>65 years of marriage</u> on December 27th please send them a card!

<u>Pray for those unable to come to worship</u>: Martin Bleck, Ed Brown, Birdie Burton, York Doerr, Bob and Angie Groom, Edith Haecker, Pat Janot, Jeanne Nelson, Darlene Simon, and Kay Wasaff.

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: Benita, Paula Battle, Donald and Carol Baum, Rose Baumgarten, Sally Blackburn, Mary Bloom, Steve Boyles, Ann Bunn, Amy Carl, Jerry & Elijah Connor, Judy Craun, Doug Crinklaw, Katie Czajkowski, Sophia Czajkowski, Judy Drezek, Charlie Eidson, Joel Gillespie, Joan and Frank Goodhart, Catherine Harbison, Deanna Harbison, Bradley Kim Joan and Laurie Heintzelman, Char Henry, Lisa Hill, Brian Johnson, Don Johnson, Connie Kendrick, the Kennedy family, Marnah Lund, Laura Margolin, Doug Mayes, Ed Moninger, John and Pollie Morison, Maddie Murray, Bob Myers, Silvana Oderisi, Lori Ogborn, Katie Orcutt, Shary Raske, Paula Rega, Marci Ries, Sharon Rogers, Betty Roth, Lou Schuster, Inge Seiter, Kelsey Slay, Brant Smith, Vasili Soultoukis, Chad Strausbaugh, Charley Underdahl, and Caleb Winig.

December 17, 2023 Second Sunday of Advent

I. Gathering: The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

Welcome

Centering Music As the Dark Awaits the Dawn setting, Ann Krentz Organ

Advent Candle Lighting Litany

Song O Come, O Come, Emmanuel stanza 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: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Litany

At every beginning there is a yearning for the one who is coming.

O Emmanuel, Open us up to your coming.

We gather together to allow our deeply held hopes to be reshaped by God's promises.

O Emmanuel, Open us up to your coming.

We wait for the day when God will make for us a future that is no longer predicated on our fear. O Emmanuel, **Open us up to your coming.**

We find a new receptivity within us that desires God's will over our own will and relies on God's justice and mercy to accomplish it. O Emmanuel, **Open us up to your coming.**

Prayer

Jesus, we welcome your presence now with the lighting of these candles, whose flames bring warmth to winter and fill this place with the glow of hope. **Amen.**

Song O Come, O Come, Emmanuel stanza 6

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;

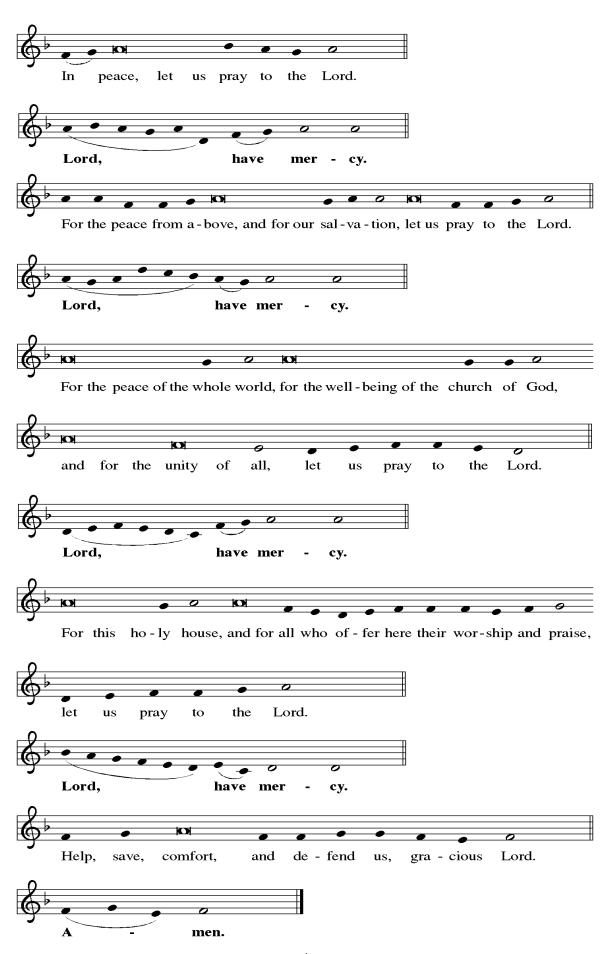
O Sun of justice, now draw near.

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain*

Greeting

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

Kyrie



Prayer of the Day

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**.

II. Word: God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

First Reading Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,

to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's fay

²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—

to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations;

they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense,

and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,

and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,

he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,

as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,

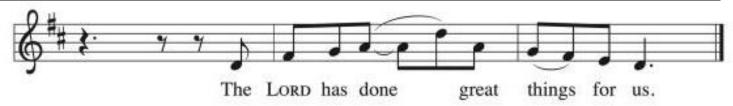
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,

so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise

to spring up before all the nations.

Reader: "The Word of the Lord." Response: "Thanks be to God."



¹When the LORD restored the for- [|] tunes of Zion, then were we like [|] those who dream.

²Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with | shouts of joy.

Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great | things for them."

³The LORD has done great | things for us, and we are | glad indeed.

⁴Restore our for- | tunes, O LORD, like the watercourses | of the Negeb. *Refrain*

⁵Those who | sowed with tears will reap with | songs of joy.

⁶Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed, will come again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves. *Refrain*

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

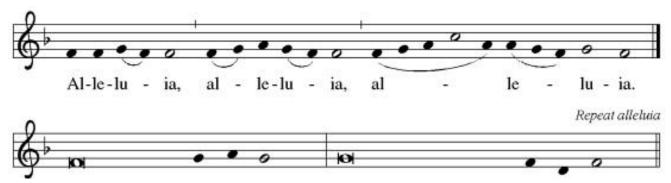
Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Reader: "The Word of the Lord." Response: "Thanks be to God."

(8:30) Gospel Acclamation



Cantor: I am sending my messen- | ger before you,* who will prepare your | way before you. (Matt. 11:10)

(8:30) Gospel John 1:6-8, 19-28

Response after announcement of the Gospel: "Glory to you, O Lord."

John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Response at the conclusion of the Gospel: "Praise to you, O Christ."

(8:30) **Sermon**

Who are you?

Pastor Jon O Nelson

Silence for reflection and prayer.

(11:00) Children's Christmas Program

"Light of Hope" A Trilogy for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany

Mark Patterson

A Reading from Isaiah 9

Narrators

Light of Hope, Light of Peace

Choir

(Soloists: Walker Teague, Mollie Teague, Sonja Cave)

A Reading from "Living the Word" by Mark Burrows

Narrators

(This is an "Amen!/Aw, Man" story. Listen closely. Every time you hear something good or hopeful, shout, "AMEN!" And every time you hear something bad or sad, say, "AW, MAN.")

Unto Us

Choir

Narrators Choir

(Congregation joins singing in canon at the direction of Terri and Jim Larsen)

"Take the light of Christ to the world, Serving others wherever you go. Share God's hope, share God's love."

Assistant Directors: Jim and Terri Larsen

Pianist: Patty Ballentine

Costume Assistants: Lori Harms and Pam Buckley

Narrators: Alina Dabel, Vee Nelson

Chimers: Sonja Cave, David Nelson, Mollie Teague

Mary – Mira Powell

Joseph – Armand Teague

Angels – Penelope Sulouff and Evelyn Judy

Shepherds and Sages – Coleman Beatty, Walker Beatty, Magnolia Sulouff, Sara Teague Choir: Coleman Beatty, Walker Beatty, Klara Cave, Sonja Cave, Evelyn Judy, David Nelson, Magnolia Sulouff, Penelope Sulouff, Armand Teague, Mollie Teague, Sara Teague, Walker Teague

Hymn of the Day

People, Look East

ELW 248 Bulletin page 12

Prayers

Each petition concludes, "Lord in your mercy." Response: "Hear our prayer."

III. Meal: God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

Offering

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church: preaching and teaching the good news of our salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ, and caring for the poor.

During the offering, the table is set for the Lord's Supper.

Offering of Music

O Splendor of God's Glory Bright

arr. Brenda Portman

Offertory Prayer

God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

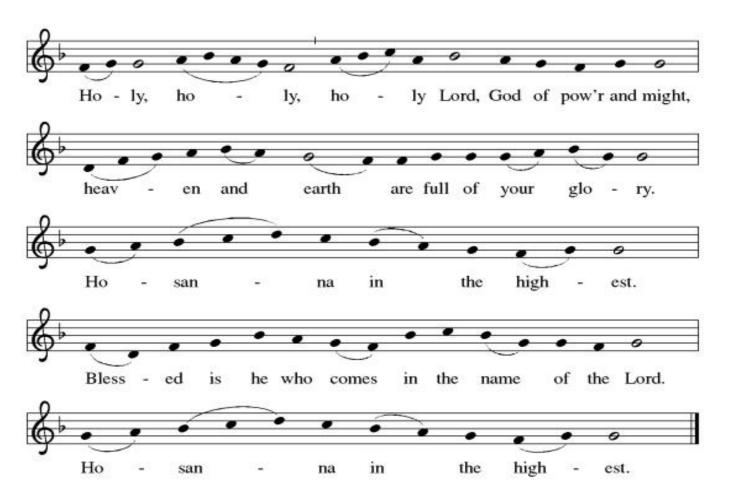
The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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:



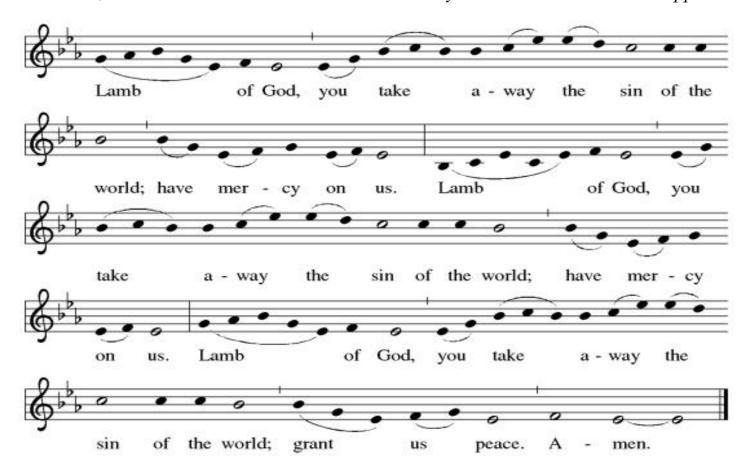
Words of Institution

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Holy Communion

When receiving Communion, either stand or kneel at the Rail. The Pastor will distribute the bread and a Communion Assistant will come with a tray of pre-filled cups of wine and grape juice. The juice will be in the middle of the tray. Gluten-free wafers are available as an alternative to bread. St. Stephen is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, so all are welcome to receive Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper.



Communion Music

11:00 Christmas Carols: Mollie Teague, David Nelson, Sonja Cave

Communion Hymn

As the Dark Awaits the Dawn

ELW 261

Bulletin page 13

Table Blessing

Prayer after Communion

IV. Sending: God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

Sending Hymn

Joy to the World

ELW 267

Bulletin page 14

Blessing
The God of peace bless you,
the love of Christ sustain you in hope,
and the anointing of the Spirit + remain upon you
now and forever. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Keep awake. Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Joy to the World

Setting, David Evan Thomas

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As the Dark Awaits the Dawn; Anne Krentz Organ; Piano reflections on Advent tunes
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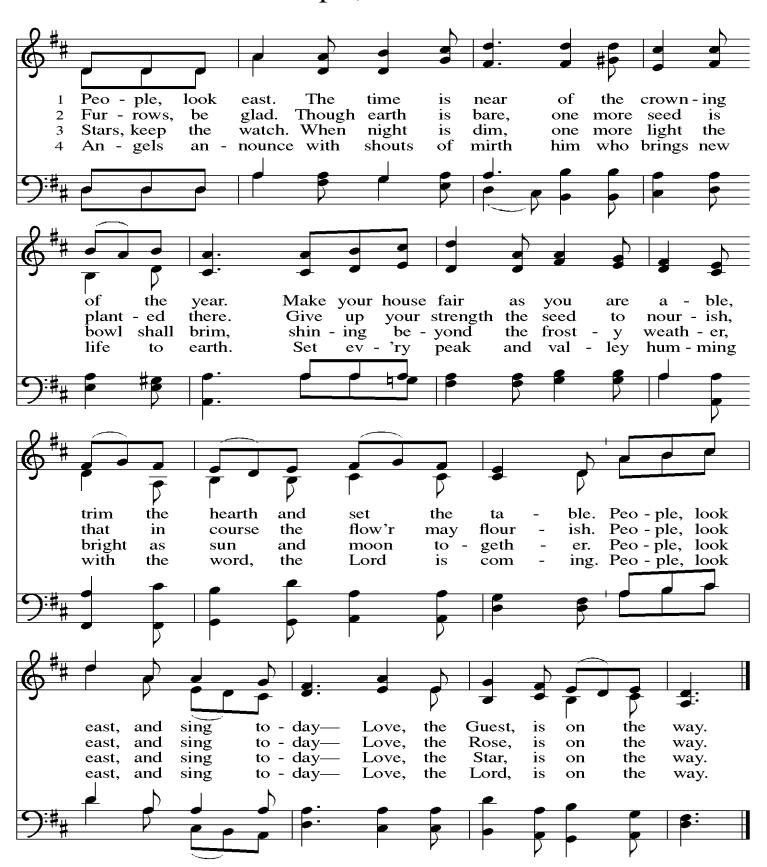
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People, Look East



Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881–1965

Music: BESANÇON, French carol; arr. Barry Rose, b. 1934
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As the Dark Awaits the Dawn



Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953 Music: LUCENT, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929 Text © 1996 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Music © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

Joy to the World



As We Gather

Parents! Thanks for bringing your children to worship.

- ❖ Did you know that intergenerational worship is the single most important activity encouraging children's faith formation? (See vibrantfaith.com)
- ❖ When parents and children need to take a break for a few minutes, there's a play area with toys and books in the room right beneath the Worship Space.
- ❖ Age-appropriate activity bags are available in the Gathering Space ask an usher for assistance.

Assistance is Available for You:

- **❖ An induction loop** is provided for the benefit of hearing aid users. To use, please switch your hearing aid to "T."
- ❖ Large print worship materials are available ask an usher.
- **Rest rooms** are accessible through the door in the wing to the left of the altar.
- ❖ If someone should need emergency medical assistance, CPR supplies, and a first aid kit are located in the hallway next to the Fellowship Hall.

<u>Health Update</u>: We always encourage you to monitor yourself for symptoms of illness and to worship from home if you are experiencing any. We have masks and hand sanitizer available for use in our building should you require.

What's Happening Today

Flowers are given by Jim Weilmuenster in memory of Sue Blanks Weilmuenster.

Upcoming

<u>Committee chairs, Council officers and staff: Annual Reports for 2023</u> are due to the church office no later than **Friday, December 22**. Please send your annual reports electronically to Parish Administrator Hollie Jones.

<u>From the Financial Secretary</u> Remember, the last day for all 2023 contributions is Sunday, **December 24**. Anything received after that date will be credited to 2024. Also, please return your pledge card to the office if you have not yet done so.

<u>Dining Groups Shuffle.</u> The consensus reached at our meeting recently was that we would reshuffle the dining groups every six months to encourage new connections and relationships (you are welcome to keep meeting with your old group too). Sign up on the insert if you would like to join a dining group for the first half of 2024.

<u>Christmas Decorating!</u> Friday, December 22nd at 2:00pm. If you would like to help us decorate the sanctuary for Christmas services, please sign up on the insert sheet.

<u>Christmas Caroling</u>. We will go Christmas Caroling on <u>Sunday</u>, <u>December 17 starting at 4:00 PM</u>. Groups of carolers will visit several families of our congregation, singing to them outside their homes. Returning to Church, we will enjoy chili and cornbread. Come join us as we bring some Christmas cheer to our sick and home-bound members. Bring your favorite chili and/or cornbread to share afterward in the Fellowship Hall. Please sign up on the insert if you will be able to attend.

<u>Have Fun and Support our St. Stephen Preschool</u> during our annual Winter Carnival Sunday, January 21, 2:00 – 4:00 PM. Want to help with Winter BINGO, Ice Fishing, Winter Putt-Putt, Penguin Bowling, and more? See the insert and mark the insert sheet if you're able to help!



Lutheran World Relief Christmas Project Matching Funds

With your kind donations to St. Stephen's Memorial Funds, the St. Stephen's Social Ministry is in a position to match congregational donations to our Lutheran World Relief Christmas project – up to a total of \$3,000 for all donations made by Sunday, Christmas Eve, and will be designated for:

Israel And Gaza, Civilians Caught In Danger Need You - Lutheran World Relief has a long history of reaching our neighbors in Israel and Gaza. We join you in praying urgently, and we thank you for standing ready to care for innocent civilians caught in the crossfire. Your love has long been reaching our neighbors caught in conflict. With your support, together, we will not abandon these neighbors now. Your caring gift will deliver critically needed resources like medical care, food, water and essential supplies where they are needed most.

The Ukraine, Citizens Have Fled, Some Are Going Back, And Millions Are In Dire Need Within Their Country - Lutheran World Relief has committed millions of dollars in response this crisis, and we expand our response to reach more Ukrainians as we secure additional funding. We have deployed technical staff to support our relief operations, including program managers, a health advisor, and an advisor to lead our efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in Ukraine and for Ukrainian refugees.

HOW TO DONATE: Online at the St. Stephen website, go to "Contact Us," "Giving," "Supporting St. Stephen Now." And "...VANCO service by clicking here." and click on the "Lutheran World Relief" icon; By Check, make checks payable to - St. Stephen Lutheran Church; For: LWR; or Cash in an Envelope Marked for Lutheran World Relief.



Lutheran World Relief

Worship and Fellowship for Advent and Christmas -

Allow the Spirit to nourish you with some moments of contemplation, as we gather at **7:00 PM** on these **Wednesdays in Advent**:

- December 20, 7:00PM (Lament)
- Dec 21, 7:00PM at Our Saviors Lutheran Church Longest Night Service

Children's Christmas Program

• Sunday, <u>December 17 at our 11:00 AM</u> Worship Service

Christmas Caroling outside to some of our ill and homebound folk.

Sunday, December 17

- 4:00 PM We meet in the Fellowship Hall to organize.
- **6:00 PM** We'll return to the Fellowship Hall to share a meal together. Bring chili and/or cornbread to share! (If you're not able to make the caroling, feel free to join the meal gathering and vice versa!)

Christmas Eve (all evening services with candlelight):

- 9:45 AM Worship and Holy Communion (Advent 4)
- 7:30 PM Worship featuring sermon, choirs, and Holy Communion
- 10:00 PM Contemplative Worship Service with Holy Communion

Christmas Day at Our Saviors Lutheran Church 10:30am Service

New Years Eve, December 31:

• 9:45 AM – Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion

St. Stephen Calendar: December 10 – December 17, 2023

SUNDAY, December 17 ~ Advent 3

8:30 AM Worship – Holy Communion (live-streamed on our YouTube channel)

9:45 AM Matins Choir Rehearsal (Worship Space)

10:00 AM Christmas Program Rehearsal (Fellowship Hall)

11:00 AM Worship – Holy Communion & Christmas Program (live-streamed)

4:00 PM Christmas Caroling (Fellowship Hall)

6:00 PM Chili Potluck Dinner (Fellowship Hall)

MONDAY, December 18

10:00 AM Staff meeting (Pastor Jon's Office)

1:30 PM Bible Study(Fellowship Hall)

2:30 PM Stephen Ministry Meeting (Pastor Jon's Office)

TUESDAY, December 19

12-6 PM Photos (Library/Conference Room)

WEDNESDAY, December 20

6:15 PM St. Stephen Ringers Rehearsal (Worship Space)

7:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer – Lament (Worship Space)

7:00 PM AA Meeting (Fellowship Hall)

7:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Worship Space)

THURSDAY, December 21

12:30 PM Staff Bulletin Review (Library/Conference Room)

7:00 PM Longest Night Service (Our Saviour's Lutheran Church)

FRIDAY, December 22

2:00 PM Christmas Decoration of the Church

SATURDAY, December 23

5:30 PM AA Meeting (Fellowship Hall)

SUNDAY, December 24 ~ Advent 4 & Christmas Eve

9:00 AM Coffee & Conversation (Gathering Space)

9:45 AM Worship Advent 4 – Holy Communion (live-streamed)

7:00 PM Prelude Music for Christmas Eve – Choirs and Bells

7:30 PM Worship – Holy Communion (live-streamed)

10:00 PM Contemplative Worship – Holy Communion

Leading our Worship and Hospitality Today

	(8:30) Rita Kristiansen and Amy Bergh
Audio-Visual Team	(8:30) Beth Grant (11:00) Doug Moore
Bread Baker	
Cantors	(8:30) Karen Shoberg (11:00) Sandy Croushore
Communion Assistants	(8:30) Randy & Chris Punchard
	(11:00) Harvey Nelson and David Nelson
	(8:30) J.R. & Diana Lyons (11:00) Susan Kauffman
Lectors	(8:30) Diana Tiller-Dichtel (11:00) Children's Program
Preacher & Presider	
Tellers	Jeanne Garrison, Linda Vonderheide, Joe Beene
Ushers	(8:30) JR Lyons (11:00) Jim Weilmuenster and George Bass

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

612 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185 <u>www.saintstephenlutheran.net</u> (757) 229-6688

Love God, Love People, Form Faith.

(St. Stephen Lutheran Church Vision Statement)

All of Us, Called Through Our Baptisms

Pastor Jon Nelson (320-295-8861)

Pastor Alex Sheppard-Witt (717-434-5037)

Karen Ives – Director of Music (757-229-6688)

Hollie Jones – Parish Administrator (229-6688)

Diana Tiller-Dichtel – Parish Nurse (232-5924)

Holly Ready – Preschool Director (229-6688)

Doing Ministry in the World Pastorjn@saintstephenlutheran.net Pastorasw@saintstephenlutheran.net MusicDir@saintstephenlutheran.net Office@saintstephenlutheran.net Parishnurse@saintstephenlutheran.net Preschool@saintstephenlutheran.net

Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center (873-2273; counselors are in Williamsburg on Thursdays)

Welcome to St. Stephen Lutheran Church!

Please fill this out and drop it in the offering plate or give it to an usher.

December 17, 2023

Name:		·	_
For guests and memb			
Address (Home)			
City/State	Zip	<u> </u>	
Telephone #			
E-Mail Address		_	
Guests Only: I belong to			
Church Address			
Please check as many a	as pertain:		
Member			
First time guest Regular guest			
Guest (out of tov	vn)		
Student at Willia			
Looking for a ch			
Desire to speak v	with pastor		
Would like more	information about Ste	ephen Ministry	
Would like a Par	ish Nurse to contact m	ne	
Any comments? Pleas	e be sure your name is	s above, so we may respon	d, if necessary

Prayer Requests

Please add to the prayer list in this month's bulletin and next month's <i>Quill</i> : Name:		
Please remove from prayer concerns:		
Name:		
I need a name tag		
I will help decorate the sanctuary		
I would like to help with the Preschool Winter Carnival		
Set up/work at a game station:		
Bake a cake for the cake walk		
Bake or provide goodies for the snack stand		
I/we will be Caroling on Dec 17 th		
I/We would like to be a part of the next round of dining groups.		
I am willing to be a convener of a dining group		