



St. Stephen Lutheran Church

One of 13,000 Stephen Ministry Congregations Around the World



FOURTH SUNDAY
OF
Advent

December 24, 2023

For Your Prayers –December 25-31, 2023

Lectionary readings for this week:

Monday: Isaiah 62:6-12 Psalm 97 (11) Titus 3:4-7 Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20

Tuesday: Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15 Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60 Psalm 148

Wednesday: Exodus 33:18-23 1 John 1:1-9 Psalm 148

Thursday: Jeremiah 31:15-17 Matthew 2:13-18 Psalm 148

Friday: Isaiah 49:5-15 Matthew 12:36-50 Psalm 148

Saturday: Proverbs 9:1-12 2 Peter 3:8-13 Psalm 148

Next Sunday's Readings: Isaiah 61:10-62:3 Psalm 148 Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 2:22-40

Join your prayers for healing 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.**

Pray for those unable to come to worship: **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, David Maris, Laura Margolin, Doug Mayes, Becky Murphy, 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 24, 2024 Fourth Sunday of Advent

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

Welcome

Centering Music

Veni, Emmanuel
Marie Nelson, Cello

Setting, Raymond H. Haan

Advent Candle Lighting Litany

Song

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

stanza 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: 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, **Surprise us by your coming.**

We gather together to let God's good news reorient our lives.

O Emmanuel, **Surprise us by your coming.**

We wait for the day when all the world will see the sign that God is with us.

O Emmanuel, **Surprise us by your coming.**

We are shocked by how God comes close, even at this very moment.

O Emmanuel, **Surprise us by 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 8

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear. *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.**

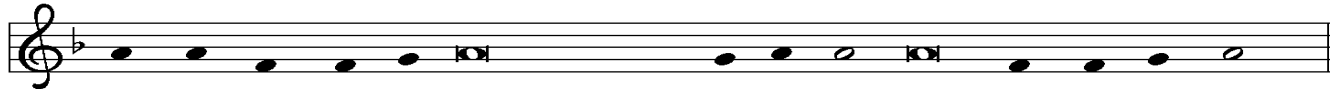
Kyrie



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



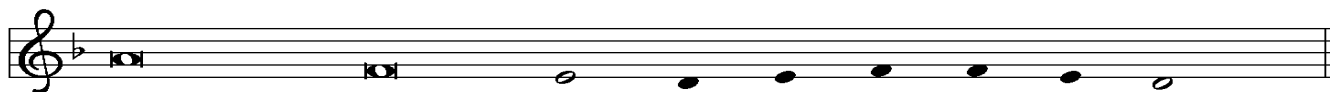
For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - va - tion, let us pray to the Lord.



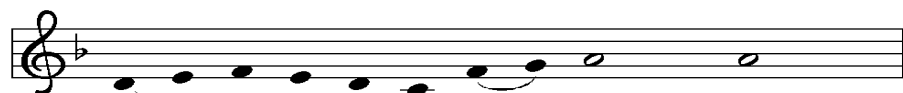
Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well - being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this ho - ly house, and for all who of - fer here their wor - ship and praise,



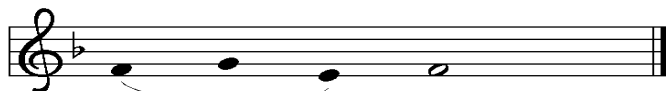
let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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

First Reading

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Instead of David building a house (temple) for God, God promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, God's anointed.

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever

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

Psalm Hymn: *My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness*

ELW 251

Bulletin page 11

Second Reading

Romans 16:25-27

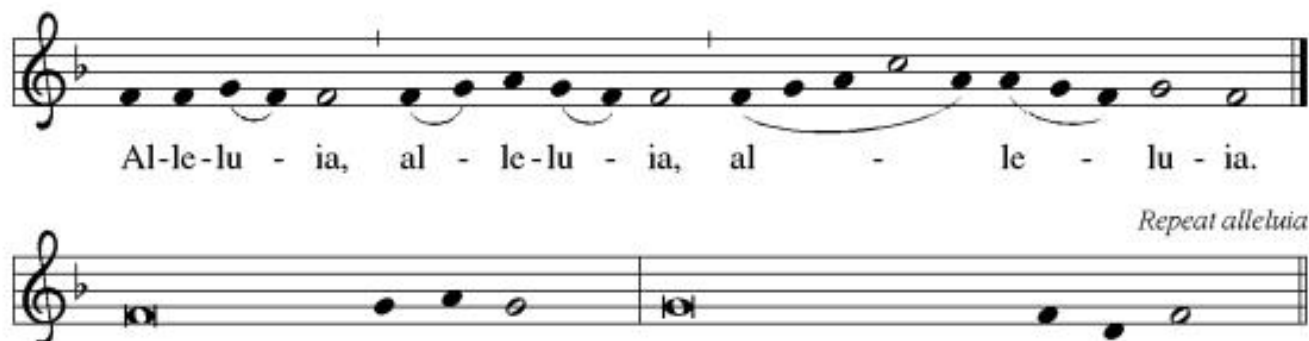
Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because, in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long

ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

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

Gospel Acclamation



Choir; Here I am, the servant | of the Lord;* let it be with me according | to your word
(Luke 1:38)

Gospel

Luke 1:26-38

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

In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

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

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

Magnificat

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams

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:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r 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.

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.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy
on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace. A - men.

Communion Hymn

That Boy Child of Mary

ELW 293
Bulletin page 13

Signs and Wonders

ELW 672
Bulletin page 14

Table Blessing

Prayer after Communion

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

Sending Hymn

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

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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

Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland

J.S. Bach



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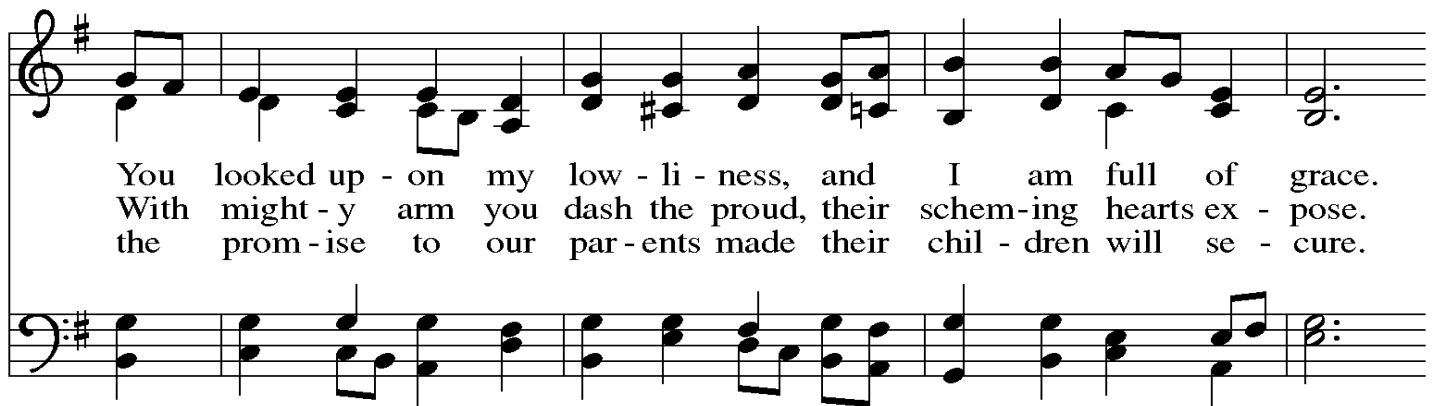
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My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness



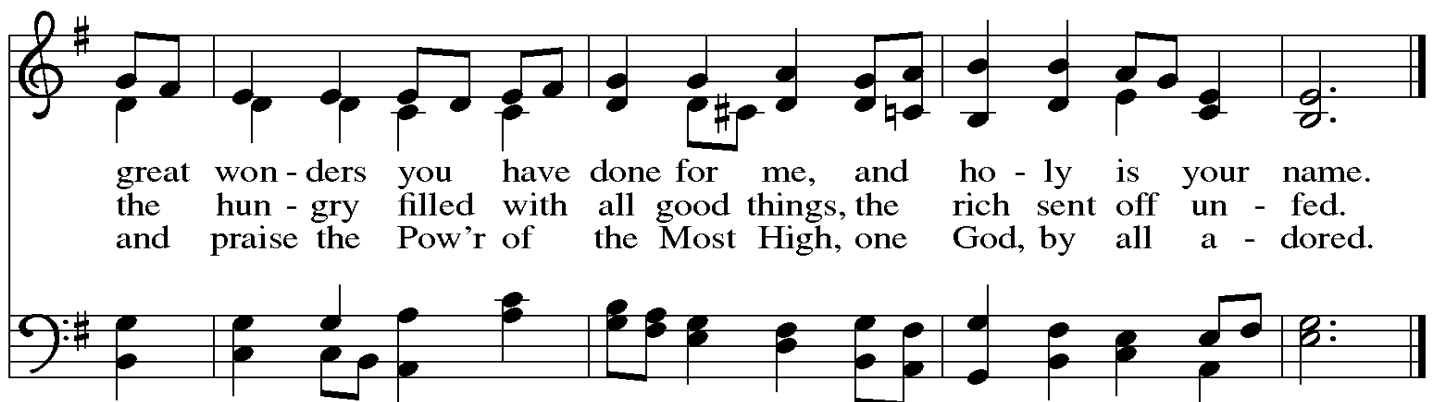
1 My soul pro-claims your great-ness, Lord; I sing my Sav-ior's praise!
2 To all who live in ho-ly fear your mer-cy ev-er flows.
3 To Is-ra-el, your ser-vant blest, your help is ev-er sure;



You looked up-on my low-li-ness, and I am full of grace.
With might-y arm you dash the proud, their schem-ing hearts ex-pose.
the prom-ise to our par-ents made their chil-dren will se-secure.



Now ev-'ry land and ev-'ry age this bless-ing shall pro-claim—
The ruth-less you have cast a-side, the low-ly throned in-stead;
Sing glo-ry to the Ho-ly One, give hon-or to the Word,

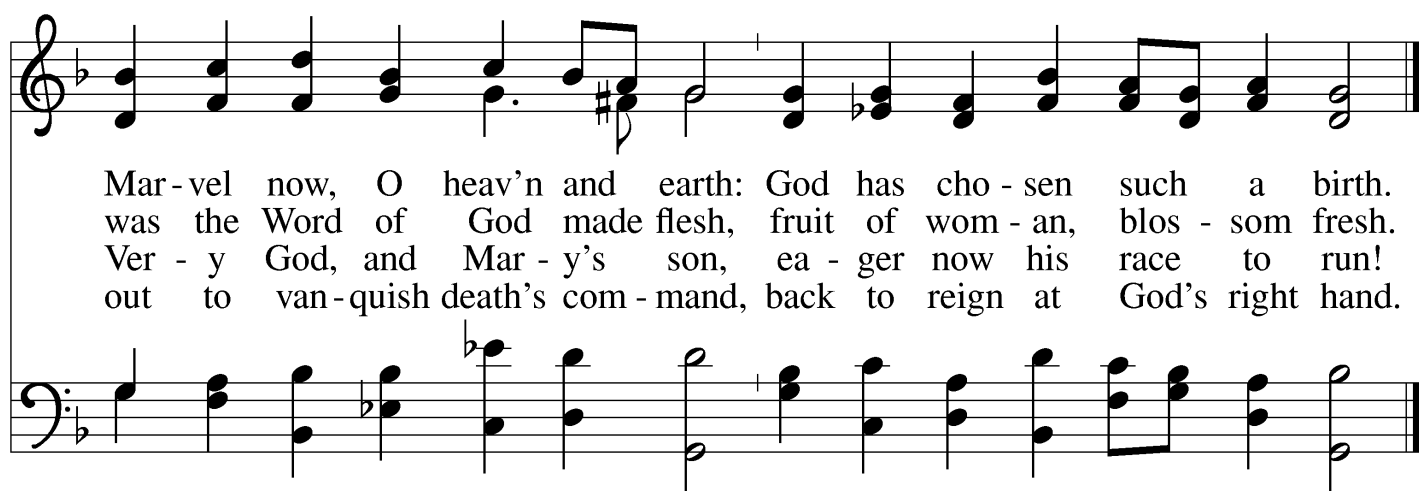


great won-ders you have done for me, and ho-ly is your name.
the hun-gry filled with all good things, the rich sent off un-fed.
and praise the Pow'r of the Most High, one God, by all a-dored.

Savior of the Nations, Come



1 Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; vir - gin's son, make here your home.
2 Not by hu - man flesh and blood, but the mys - tic Breath of God,
3 Won - drous birth—oh, won - drous child— from his throne, a vir - gin mild!
4 From God's heart the Sav - ior speeds, back to God his path - way leads;



Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth: God has cho - sen such a birth.
was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of wom - an, blos - som fresh.
Ver - y God, and Mar - y's son, ea - ger now his race to run!
out to van - quish death's com - mand, back to reign at God's right hand.


5 Now your manger, shining bright,
hallows night with newborn light.
Night cannot this light subdue;
let our faith shine ever new.

6 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord,
virgin's son, incarnate Word!
To the holy Trinity
praise we sing eternally!


Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340-397; Martin Luther, 1483-1546; tr. hymnal version
Music: NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND, J. Walter, *Geistliche Gesangbüchlein*, 1524
Text © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

That Boy-Child of Mary


Refrain



That boy - child of Mar - y was born in a sta - ble,




a man - ger his cra - dle in Beth - le - hem.



1 What shall we call him, child of the man - ger?
2 His name is Je - sus, God ev - er with us,
3 How can he save us, how can he help us,
4 Gift of the Fa - ther, to hu - man moth - er,

Refrain



What name is giv - en in Beth - le - hem?
God giv - en for us in Beth - le - hem.
born here a - mong us in Beth - le - hem?
makes him our broth - er in Beth - le - hem.

5 One with the Father,
he is our Savior,
heaven-sent helper
in Bethlehem.

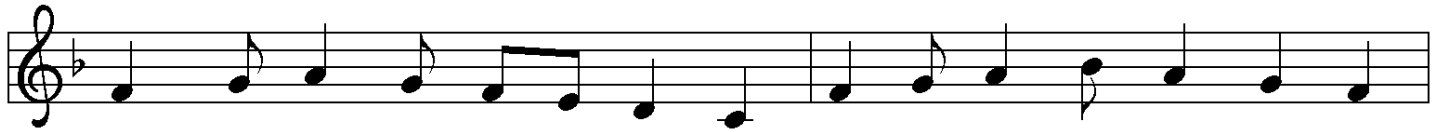
6 Gladly we praise him,
love and adore him,
give ourselves to him
in Bethlehem.

Text: Tom Colvin, 1925–2000

Music: BLANTYRE, Malawi traditional; adapt. Tom Colvin

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Signs and Wonders



1 Signs and won - ders lead the danc - ing from the heart God frees from fear:
2 Hope and free - dom join the cir - cle: Mar - y to the gar - den came,
3 Cast a - side all fear and hid - ing; hand in hand we dance the round.



wings of an - gels greet the mai - den, and God finds a dwell - ing here;
saw the ra - diance of the mar - vel, heard the Ris - en call her name;
God is with us, Christ, a - bid - ing, and the Spir - it's gifts a - bound.



bold - ly may we lift our hands, bow the head, and voice A - men;
bold - ly may we heed Christ's call, step be - yond the gar - den wall:
Called by God to ho - li - ness, let us bold - ly serve and bless;



thus does glo - ry shine at mid - night: o - pen hearts in - vite the star - light.
beau - ti - ful the feet pro - ceed - ing with good news of death's de - feat - ing.
and to hearts that sigh and hun - ger may our lives dance signs and won - ders.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953

Music: FREU DICH SEHR, *Trente quatre psaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551

Text © 2005 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

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.

Health Update: 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 Arnie Janot in honor of their 65th wedding anniversary!

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

Upcoming

The Church Office will be closed the week after Christmas, reopening January 3. If you have emergency need for pastoral care between Christmas and January 3, please call **Pastor Nelson**.

Have Fun and Support our St. Stephen Preschool 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!

St. Stephen Calendar: December 24 – December 31, 2023

SUNDAY, December 24 ~ *Advent 4 & Christmas Eve*

9:45 AM **Worship Advent 4 – Holy Communion (live-streamed on our YouTube channel)**

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

7:30 PM **Worship – Holy Communion**

10:00 PM **Contemplative Worship – Holy Communion**

MONDAY, December 25

Office and Preschool closed

TUESDAY, December 26

Office and Preschool closed

WEDNESDAY, December 27

Office and Preschool closed

THURSDAY, December 28

Office and Preschool closed

FRIDAY, December 29

Office and Preschool closed

SATURDAY, December 30

5:30 PM **AA Meeting (Fellowship Hall)**

SUNDAY, December 31 ~ *Christmas 1*

9:00 AM **Coffee & Conversation (Gathering Space)**

9:45 AM **Worship - Lessons and Carols – Holy Communion (live-streamed)**

Leading our Worship and Hospitality Today

Acolyte/Crucifer..... (9:45) Alina Dabel
Altar Guild (9:45) Diane McCurry
Audio-Visual Team..... (9:45) Beth Grant
Bread Baker..... Carol Wiers & Pat Fretz
Cantors (9:45) Choir
Communion Assistants (9:45) Jennifer Dabel and Alina Dabel
Flower Delivery Diane McCurry
Greeters/Hosts..... (9:45) Paul and Rita Kristiansen
Lectors..... (9:45) John McCurry
Preacher and Presider Rev. Jon O. Nelson
Tellers..... John McCurry, Carol Harman, Sandy Croushore
Ushers.....(9:45am) Bob Achenbach and Glenn Joppa



Sending you
the warmest of wishes
for a holiday filled with

FAMILY & LOVE
FRIENDS & LAUGHTER

SEASON'S
greetings

and best wishes for a JUST and PEACEFUL

NEW YEAR

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

612 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

www.saintstephenlutheran.net

(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)

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

Doing Ministry in the World

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