

Blessed are you  
among women

LUKE 1:42



# **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

## **December 22, 2024**

Welcome to people new to this church or faith, long time Lutherans, and Christians from every tradition. Welcome to all who have no church home, want to follow Christ, have doubts, or do not believe. Welcome to new visitors and old friends. Welcome to people of every age and size, color and culture, sexual orientation and marital status, ability and challenge. Welcome to believers and questioners and questioning believers. This is a place where you are welcome to celebrate and sorrow, rejoice and recover. This is a place where lives are made new. Welcome on this day.

Music            “A Christmas Fantasy”    Joel Ramey

## **The Gathering**

### Advent Wreath Lighting

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath  
That marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.  
As we light the candles on this wreath,  
Open our eyes to see your presence  
In the lowly ones of this earth.  
Enlighten us with your grace,  
That we may sing of your advent among us  
In the Word made flesh.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord,  
Whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

**Amen.**

\*Opening Hymn            *“All Earth is Hopeful”*    #266

**All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!  
Furrows lie open for God's creative task;  
This, the labor of people who struggle to see**

How God's truth and justice set ev'rybody free.

People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell;  
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel";  
She conceived him, "God with us",  
our brother, whose birth  
restores hope and courage to children of this earth.

Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared;  
New highways opened, new protocols declared.  
Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace!  
All clear ev'ry gateway, in haste, come out in haste!

We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.  
This same Lord Jesus today has come to live  
in our world; He is present, in neighbors we see  
our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.

\*Greeting

P: The steadfast love of God, the life of Jesus Christ  
and the power of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Kyrie        *"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"*    # 257 vs. 1 - 2

O come, O come, Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

REFRAIN

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

(kyrie continued)

O come, O Wisdom from on high  
embracing all things far and nigh:  
in strength and beauty come and stay;  
Teach us your will and guide our way.

REFRAIN

Hymn of Praise

*“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”*

#270 vs 1 & 3

Hark! The herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled.”  
Joyful, all you nations, rise;  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With angelic hosts proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

REFRAIN

Hark! The herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn king!”

Hail the heav’n born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
Ris’n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
born that we no more may die,  
Born to raise each child of earth,  
born to give us second birth

REFRAIN

\*Prayer of the Day

P: May God be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us Pray.

Celebrate, Page 1

## The Word of God

First Reading

Micah 5:2-5

Celebrate pg. 1

L: Word of God, Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading

Hebrews 10:5-10

Celebrate pg. 3

L: Word of God, Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*(Please stand as you are able)*

Gospel Acclamation

*“Angels We Have Heard on High”*

**#289 vs. 1**

Angels we have heard on high  
Sweetly singing o’er the plains  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their joyous strains

*G l o — r i a . . . i n e x c e l s i s D e o*

*G l o — r i a . . . i n e x c e l s i s D e o*

P: The Holy Gospel acc. to St. Luke, the 1st Chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O God.**

\*Gospel Reading

Luke 1:39-55

Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

\*Hymn of the Day

*“Each Winter As the Year Grows Older”*

**#252**

Each winter as the year grows older,  
We each grow older too.  
The chill sets in a little colder;  
The verities we knew  
Seem shaken and untrue.

When race and class cry out for treason,  
When sirens call for war,  
They overshout the voice of reason  
And scream till we ignore  
All we held dear before.

Yet I believe beyond believing,  
That life can spring from death:  
That growth can flower from our grieving;  
That we can catch our breath  
And turn transfixed by faith.

So even as the sun is turning  
To journey to the north,  
The living flame, in secret burning,  
Can kindle on the earth  
And bring God's love to birth.

O Child of ecstasy and sorrows,  
O Prince of peace and pain,  
Brighten today's world by tomorrow's,  
Renew our lives again;  
Lord Jesus, come and reign!

## The Communion Meal

### \*Passing of the Peace

P: May the peace of God be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

Offering— We honor and worship God by returning some of the gifts with which we have been blessed.

Music            “Ode to Joy”  
                      Good News Singers  
                      Nathan Lapp, trumpet

### Offertory

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”      #283 vs. 1

O come, all ye faithful  
Joyful and triumphant

O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem  
Come and behold him  
Born the King of angels

### *REFRAIN*

O come, let us adore him  
O come, let us adore him  
O come, let us adore him  
Christ the Lord

## Offering Prayer

P: Creator God, you made the whole world,  
Even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us.  
We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine.  
Strengthen us with this food, that we may live in expectation  
For the advent of your Child, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen**

## \*Great Thanksgiving

P: May God 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 God thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy....

## \*Words of Institution

### \*Lord's Prayer

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

P: Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you.  
Share in the feast of salvation.



*(You may be seated)*

Holy Communion

*Guests: You are welcome to come forward to receive Communion as part of this church family! The wine is red. The grape juice is white. Children are always welcome to come forward and receive a special blessing if they have never communed before.*

Lamb of God

*“Love Has Come” #292 vs. 1 & 3*

Love has come a light in the darkness!  
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.  
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;  
Hear how their song of joy arises:  
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!  
Love! Love! Glory to God on high!

Love has come and never will leave us!  
Love is life everlasting and free.  
Love is Jesus within and among us,  
Hear how their song of joy arises:  
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.  
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

*“Mary’s Little Boy Child” by Jestor Harris  
Solo—Tina Gates*

Communion Hymn *“Christ Our Peace” ACS #1037*

Christ, our peace,  
you break down the walls that divide us;  
Christ, our peace, come, make us one body in you.

# The Sending

## \*Communion Blessing

P: May this Holy Communion of our Lord Jesus Christ  
Strengthen you and keep you in God's grace now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## \*Prayer after Communion

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

## \*Blessing

P: May God direct your ways in peace,  
Make you abound in love for one another and for all,  
And strengthen your hearts  
as we wait for the coming of Christ  
Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Bless you now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## \*Closing Hymn    “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”    #254

1. Come, thou long expected Jesus,  
Born to set thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us;  
Let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation,  
Hope of all the earth thou art,  
Dear desire of ev'ry nation,  
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.

2. Born thy people to deliver,  
Born a child, and yet a king;  
Born to reign in us forever,  
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By thine all sufficient merit  
Raise us to thy glorious throne.

\*Dismissal

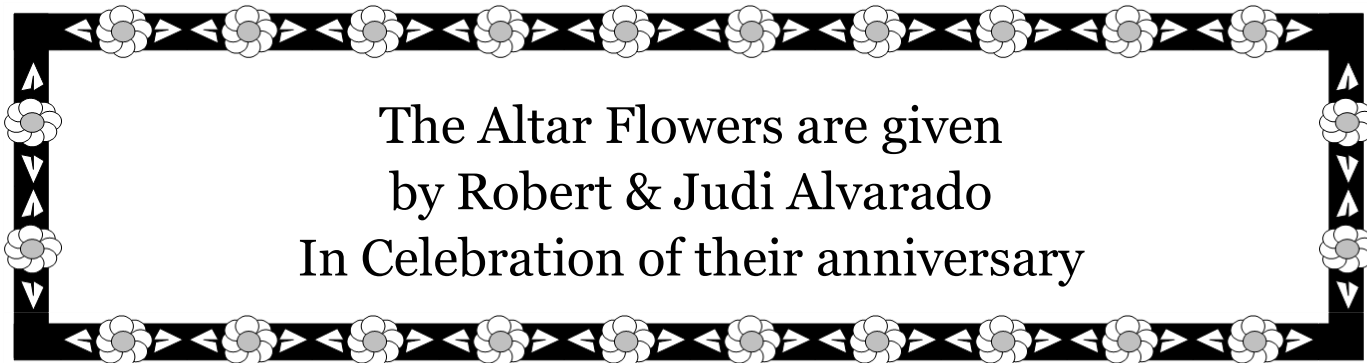
P: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Music            “And the Glory of the Lord” G.F. Handel

Reader— Janet Slay  
Coffee Host— Fellowship Hall  
Altar Guild— Judi Alvarado

**Christmas Eve - ushers needed**



Sign up for 2025 Flowers



### SHORT TERM:

Ana Cardenas, John B., Trace Hull, Linda, Scoutmaster Scott, Family of Ryan Fairrington, Connie & Family of Paul Cunningham, Glosier family, Julie Mouw & Family of Marty Lundin, Unemployed, George Webber, Michelle & Family, Family of Travis, Boci, Isaac & Marissa, Chris Powers, Gloria, Jack & Kim Sanford, Lucia, Dennis Lewis, Beth & Family of Barbara Stiles, Marta's parents, Adrienne, Gary & Louse Matz, Friends in Tel Aviv, family of Barbara Klapper, family of Lauren Patrick, Patrick & Family, Moore family, Brown Family, Family of Sandra Barker, Nick, James, Beth Mills, Mary D., Tom, Galahad, Susan O., Debbie, Sam, Michael Lee, Nate Barker, Grandpa Dennis, Bob & Shirley Salter, Monica & Family, Lurline Moore, Beth Butler, Jen, Robbin, Maria Mendoza, Ila & Reina, Francisco, Michael, Keith, Noelle, Ensley, Tim Oldfield, Sierra, Julie R., Rosie, Janet, Sue, Middle East Peace, Tom Dawson, Taiyo, Marissa, Isaac, Alvarado family, Dustin, Father Jack Davis, Sandi Csik, Janica Paustian, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Allen, Sandy, Levi & Alexandria, Gary & Marjie Toops, Paul Paustian, Gaye Cornell, Dorothy, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Nancy, Mateo & Lina, Don, Atlas, Will, Aaron Johnson, Sal, Katarina, Stephanie Jager.

### LONG TERM:

James Sheehan, Biergiel—Colclough family, Carla Brown, Eric Utto-Galarneau, Joel Hurtgamm, Dawit and family (Ethiopia), April McCalmont, Marty Nehring, Miller Mouw, Kyle Lapp, Shelby Volpi, Ashley, Frank, Joe, Dom, Lisa & Beau, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, Bobbie Erickson, Mike, Susan Anderson, Jan Wagner, Richard C., Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Karin, Will, Chris, Pearl Runquist, Volpi & Robe Family, Cabel, Noah, Esdras, Immigrant families, The Homeless, People of Ukraine, People of Palestine/Israel, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen's Child Development Ctr, S.S. Senior Housing, Pastor Jim & Our Church Family, men & women of Armed Forces, and the Youth of today.





The Advent wreath is given to the Glory of God and in memory of Barbara's mother, Kathryn Greso who long ago taught her the meaning and to her old friend Sibbi who taught her how to tie the greens into a wreath.



Help adorn the sanctuary for Christmas Eve! Poinsettias may be donated in honor or in memory of loved ones and will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Call the office. Cost is \$15. Please make the check payable to St. Stephen's, but keep it separate from your regular offering. You may take your plant home after Tuesday, 7pm service to enjoy. Benefits our church ministries.

## **TODAY 11:00 am - Christmas Potluck**

Stay for good food & fellowship  
Come we have plenty of food!



## **Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship 7pm**

invite a friend to this momentous, joyful service.  
Livestream & recorded on the web.



## The Season of Giving

This holiday season, we thank everyone who has supported St. Stephen's this past year with their time, talent and financial contributions and look forward to support from all of our members in the year ahead.

If you need a convenient way to make regular offerings or if you plan to make an additional gift before the end of the year, we encourage you to check out our electronic giving options. As the pace of life speeds up, especially around the holidays, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions.

For more info. contact Janet Slay 475-5668

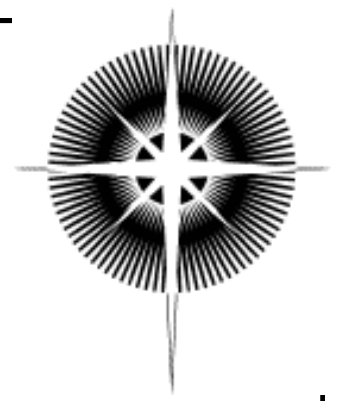
Your 2025 Offering envelopes are here, if you'd like to stop by and pick them up.

**"God uses money to confirm direction."**

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
and do not rely on your own insight.  
In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make your paths straight."*

*Proverbs 3:5-6*

## **Give a Gift. Change a Life.**



What better way to celebrate the season of Jesus' birth than to give gifts of comfort and joy to those who are in need. Give meaningful gifts that inspire leadership, nourish the hungry and heal the sick.

### **Lutheran World Relief**

provides gifts that improve the lives of people living in poverty around the world. For example: A Goat not only provides a woman farmer with milk to sell, but also helps her build a herd. Coffee seedlings help a farmer grow a lucrative crop that has the potential to significantly improve income. Seeds help farmers grow more and better crops when climate conditions are challenging. Emergency Water delivers immediate, potable water after disaster strikes. **LWR.org/gifts or 1-800-597-5972**

### **Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service**

stands ready to welcome the most vulnerable refugees who are seeking safety and hope in America. Our gifts are essential in rebuilding their lives. Gifts from "Basic Needs Kit" to "Ready for Work kit" can mean so much to those who have nothing but the clothes on their backs. **LIRS.org or 877-291-7061**

### **S.P.I.N. Socks for People in Need (box in narthex)**

NEW socks are a blessing for many reasons, especially health, but also because they provide comfort and a sense of dignity. Basic white crew socks are appreciated by everyone. But you may also choose socks for women and children. Sponsored by the Association of Faith Communities.

Worship livestream online at [www.ststephenslutheran.org](http://www.ststephenslutheran.org)

Recorded for you to view anytime.

Please participate by having your worship bulletin and Celebrate ready

Zoom Bible Studies with Pastor Jim on Wednesdays 11am & 7:30pm.

Check your email on Tuesday for the link to the Zoom meeting.

### Our Mission Statement

St. Stephen's is a welcoming, healing community who worship God in Christ, nurture people growing in faith, serve others with acceptance and love, invite people to share the joy of the spirit.

### Reconciling in Christ

“We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status.

We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ.”

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Office Hours: Mon.—Thurs. 12—5:00 pm

Ministers: The People of St. Stephen's  
Pastor: Rev. James P. Lapp  
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp  
Church Musician: Gary Roberts  
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp  
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens  
Custodian: John Hopping  
Videographers: Kent Madsen, Barb Rice, Jay Johnston

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