

Third Sunday in Advent



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
Worship Service with Holy Communion
Sunday, December 13, 2020 ■ 9:30 a.m.

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Welcome to the season of Advent ...

Advent is the first season of the new church year, and means "coming" in Latin. We mark this time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Christ (Christmas) and the anticipation of the return of Christ at the Second Coming. Our worship focuses on four traditional themes in advent including God's people (hope), the Old Testament prophets (peace), John the Baptist (love) and Mary, the mother of Jesus (joy). You see the church is decorated and adorned in the color of Royal Blue, a symbol of looking forward to welcoming the coming of The King.



In this year of COVID-19, we reflect, lament and prepare for Christ's coming. We still our hearts and minds, and move from hope, to peace, love and finally joy, acknowledging and celebrating that Christ has come, Christ is here among us, and Christ will come again.

Within our worship here at St Stephen's during this season, we have selected music and text that focus on the four themes of Advent. Our consistent use of the hymns *My Lord What a Morning*, *Lost in the Night*, *Come Now O Prince of Peace*, and *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* calls out in a world of turmoil and harkens to the knowledge that Christ has come, Christ is here, Christ WILL come again wrapped in the traditional themes of hope, peace, love and joy of the Advent season. In our prayers and in our song we call out "Come Lord Jesus, Quickly Come."

- Bryon Dockter, Director of Worship

WE PREPARE TO WORSHIP

Prelude

"Ride On, King Jesus"

arr. Ben D.

Welcome

Singing Bowl

Silence is kept for reflection.

* **Confession and Forgiveness**

*All may make the sign of the cross,
the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
whose forgiveness is sure
and whose steadfast love endures forever.
Amen.

Together let us honestly and humbly confess
that we have not lived as God desires.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Loving and forgiving God,
**we confess that we are held captive by sin.
In spite of our best efforts, we go astray.
Restore us, O God.**

**Help us be Christ to one another.
Wake us up today in the light of Christ.
Amen.**

People of God, hear this glad news:
by God's endless grace
your sins are forgiven, and you are free—
free from all that holds you back
and free to live in the peaceable realm of God.
May you be strengthened in God's love,
‡ comforted by Christ's peace,
and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

WE GIVE OUR PRAISE

* Hymn

“All Earth Is Hopeful”
Toda la tierra

ELW #266 vs. 1S, 1E, 3
S=Spanish version
E=English translation

**Toda la tierra espera al Salvador
y el surco abierto, la obra del Señor;
es el mundo que lucha por la libertad,
reclama justicia y busca la verdad.**

**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.**

**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!**

Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946
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* Greeting

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

* Advent Cantic

“My Lord, What a Morning”

ELW #438

Refrain (times two)

**My Lord, what a morning;
my Lord, what a morning;
oh, my Lord, what a morning,
when the stars begin to fall.**

**You will hear the trumpet sound,
to wake the nations underground,
looking to my God's right hand,
when the stars begin to fall. *Refrain (once)***

**You will hear the sinner cry,
to wake the nations underground,
looking to my God's right hand,
when the stars begin to fall. *Refrain (once)***

**You will hear the Christian shout,
to wake the nations underground,
looking to my God's right hand,
when the stars begin to fall. *Refrain (once)***

*** 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.**

*** Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

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,
strengthen our hearts
as we await the Lord's coming in glory.
Enlighten us with your grace,
that we may serve our neighbors in need.
Grant this through Christ our Lord,
whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.
Amen.

Light the three candles.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

First Reading

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

1 The 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;
2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
3 to 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.
4 They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
8 For 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.
9 Their 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.
10 I 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.
11 For 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.

Word of God, Word of Life.
Thanks be to God

Psalm

Psalm 126

1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
3 The LORD has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.
4 Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.
5 May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.
6 Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.

The Holy Gospel according to St John,
Glory to you, O Lord

*** Gospel**

John 1:6-8, 19-28

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." 21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." 22 Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. 24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25 They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" 26 John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, 27 the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." 28 This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord,
Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Tim

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

"Lost in the Night"

ELW #243 vs. 1, 3

**Lost in the night do the people yet languish,
longing for morning the darkness to vanquish,
plaintively sighing with hearts full of anguish.
Will not day come soon? Will not day come soon?**

**Sorrowing wand'rers, in darkness yet dwelling,
dawned has the day of a radiance excelling,
death's deepest shadows forever dispelling.
Christ is coming soon! Christ is coming soon!**

*** Prayers of Intercession**

Petition response Leader: ... Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

*** Sharing the Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
*We invite you to share the peace with those with you
and with us with "thumbs up" or comments on our Facebook page.
Text someone you care about.*

"Come Now, O Prince of Peace"

ELW #247

**Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.**

**Come now, O God of love, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.**

**Come now and set us free, O God, our Savior.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.**

**Come, Hope of unity, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.**

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Offering [Invitation to support ongoing ministries of St. Stephen's]

*** Words of Institution**

*** Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

*** Invitation to Communion**

Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here.
Come, eat and drink.

Communion is Received

ELW Page 112

***The body of Christ, given for you
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
Amen.***

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

ELW #257 vs. 5, 6

**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.**

**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***

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Strengthens you and keeps you in his grace
Today, tomorrow and forever. Amen.

*** Prayer after Communion**

Gracious and abundant God,
You have done great things for us, and we rejoice.
In this bread and cup you give us life forever.
In your boundless mercy, strengthen us
and open our hearts to the world's needs,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

WE GO INTO THE WORLD

*** Blessing**

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,
✠ now and forever. **Amen.**

Hymn

“People, Look East”

CCLI #3011380 vs. 1, 2

People look east the time is near
Of the crowning of the year
Make your house fair as you are able
Trim the hearth and set the table
People look east and sing today
Love the guest is on the way

Angels announce with shouts of mirth
Him who brings new life to earth
Set ev'ry peak and valley humming
With the word the lord is coming
People look east and sing today
Love the lord is on the way

CCLI Song # 3011380 John Ferguson
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*** Dismissal**

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

*** Postlude**

Reflection on “All Earth is Hopeful”

Ben D



Jesus said ...

"My Father's House shall be a house of prayer."

Please include the following people in your prayers this week: **Dorrie, Steve, Sara, Delores, Marge, Merwin, Loren, Jerry, Hedy, Diane, Sarah, Ed, Laura, Lois, Blaine.**

Each week different families will be included in special prayers. Please hold in your prayers: **Matthew, Lisa, Landon and Lucas, Dan and Alice, Kim and Joseph, Daniel, Annette, Lauren and Jonathan, Rob, Melissa, Maxwell, Sebastian and Vincent.**

Each week different missions that St. Stephen's support through our Sunday offerings this week we offer prayers for our brothers and sisters in Christ sharing the Good News in our community and beyond through the ministries of **Luther Seminary.**

We also offer prayers for our **brothers and sisters in Christ in the villages of Iwonde and Ihimbo, Tanzania.**

We pray for **residents and staff of group homes and care facilities, and all healthcare workers.**

We pray also for those away from home serving in the military: **Ben, Nick, Jeremy, Matthew, Zachary, Sam, Troy, Tricia, Adam, Nick, Peter D. J., Christopher, Gene, Sam, Andrew.** (Please help us keep our military member listing up to date. Thank you.)

St. Stephen's invites you to add your prayer requests to our daily prayers. We hope that this list is placed inside everyone's Bible or devotional material. All prayer requests will be listed for three weeks. Please contact the church office if additional time is needed.



Today's Altar Flowers

*In Gratitude for my Grandchildren
and Great grandchildren*

Given by: Shirley Theno

Our condolences to the **Family and friends of Helen House.** Helen passed away peacefully on Sunday, December 6. A private memorial service will be held at King of Kings Lutheran in Woodbury on Saturday, Dec. 19th.

Our condolences to **Pam Sweeney and family** on the recent death of Pam's mother.

In the midst of their sorrow may all find comfort in God's promise of life everlasting.

Leaders in Today's Service

Pastor The Rev. Tim Thompson Ph.D
Lay LiturgistDebbie Pirkl
Christian Music Leader..... Ben D.
Lectors..... Keith Gregory, John Gieser
Audio Visual Ministry Norm Goetzke, Matt Kirkwood, Jenny Van Pelt
Prayer Chain Rachel Circle, Mary Circle, Kathy Ericson, Abby Vavra
Altar GuildLori Ritt



ST STEPHEN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Liturgical texts, prayers: Sunday and Seasons.

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