

Staying Connected

Connecting to God, Each Other and the World

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

All Christmas Eve services include candle lighting and Holy Communion.
Due to COVID precautions Masks are requested to be worn.

3:30 p.m. — Family Worship

A simple, visual, joyful service, for children of all ages.
Includes Intergenerational, Interactive, Entertaining Christmas Program.

10:30 p.m. — Traditional

A formal, powerful worship service with orchestra.

CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP - 9:30 a.m. — Traditional

Celebrate Christ's birth with a quieter, more informal worship.

Service options:
In-person and
live-streamed
on St Stephen's
Facebook Page.



Come Celebrate
With Us
This
Christmas Season!

Seek Him

Growing CONNECTIONS



CLOSE THE GAP!

We are overjoyed that we are "this close" to achieving our 2022 Stewardship goal! Intentions are down compared to last year, but the increases in giving we have received so far have made a BIG difference – we are nearly there! **Can you help?** Please turn your 2022 Intention in now so we can keep "**Growing Connections!**"

When we say "increase" we are simply asking you to consider how you can make an impact. If you are able to increase your giving by \$25 (this year's average monthly increase), or even a \$1 a day increase will make a difference. Receiving intentions helps us plan for the coming year. **Remember, a \$15,000 match is at stake!**

TODAY (10:40-11:30am)

We welcome **West St Paul Police Chief Brian Sturgeon**. How is policing changing in our community? How can we help? Please join us for this important discussion.

No Open Forum Sundays, December 26 and January 2.

See you on Sunday, January 9th



Advent Reverse Calendar—Join in the fun ...

Remember to bring your "Reverse Advent" food offerings to the Manger on Christmas Eve before worship. If you did not participate in the *Advent Reverse Calendar* project, there is always the option to bring any non-perishable food donations and leave in the Neighbor's box in the Narthex. No time to shop? Consider a gift of money to Neighbors. They can stretch the funds to purchase more as they can buy in bulk. Please **bring food, essentials or cash donations** (*please no clothing or knick-knacks*) to the church— we'll get it to Neighbor's Inc. for you. **Thank you for remembering your neighbors in need and Merry Christmas to all!**

You Can Make a Difference! We continue to collect winter Clothing for Garlough and Moreland Elementary school students. These students are in grades K through 4. Thank you to those that have already donated items—these have all been brought to the schools for distribution just in time for the turn in our winter weather. Please help keep our neighborhood students warm this winter!

Small Group Invitation

Tim and Janet Gibson are interested in starting a small group at St. Stephen's and are inviting anyone interested in exploring what it means to be a part of a small group to join us on **Sunday January 16 at 4:00 pm in the Church Lounge**. We will discuss expectations of a small group, dates and times to meet, location for meetings, structure and content for the group. For example, we could base our discussions around scripture or a book we might read together, always asking the question, how does faith guide our daily life. **Looking forward to seeing you on January 16th!** - Tim and Janet Gibson

Contemplative Prayer and Study December 22 | 7-8pm via Zoom



Contemplative Prayer and Study is offered on the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month.

We are currently using the book **"Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer"** by David G. Benner. During our next gathering, December 22 we will be focusing on Chapter 6. **ZOOM ROOM 2 ID#894-3514-0057 Password 55118 Or Direct Access: bit.ly/SSLC-Room2**. Prayer has the potential to transform your life. Try it and see. You are welcome to attend any meeting.

ELCA—Lutheran Disaster Response

We would like to remind you of the ELCA—Lutheran Disaster Response program. Many times you would like to help people that are suffering the effects of disasters such as the recent tornadoes that swept through six states leaving more than 94 people reported dead or a current world crisis but wonder how you can help. The ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, they stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need. Tornado relief, Hurricane response, Haiti crisis, US Wildfires, Afghan Humanitarian crisis are just a small sampling of where you can direct your funds. Please visit the **ELCA website at <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response>** for more information or to donate online. **Checks can be sent via mail** to Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Gift Processing Center, PO Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009. Or contact by **phone 1-800-638-3522** for more information on ways to help.



Rest for Your Souls

*How are you holding up these difficult days?
Are you feeling weary?
Discouraged?*

Remember what Jesus says; **"Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden... and you will find rest for your souls."** (Matthew 11:28-29)

One of the ways we can receive that gift of rest is through the practice of Sabbath: intentionally and routinely taking time to simply stop. But for many of us, it's hard to even imagine that kind of rest!

If it's time for you to explore what Sabbath could look like in your life, then I hope you will join Pastor Tim for a short-term group in the new year. **"Sabbath Explorers"** will meet **online twice a month for two months starting in January. From 10 to 10:30 am on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays** I will be sharing one or two practical "Sabbath nuggets" that I've collected from my own explorations. You'll be able to try these simple practices out between sessions and as we go along, we'll be able to learn from each other's experiences too. Follow the link or use the QR code to get more information or to sign up if you're ready to go! <https://bit.ly/SSLC-SabExp>

Finding ways to have Sabbath in my life has been a huge blessing to me. I hope you'll come and check it out and we can explore together!

Looking for a New Volunteer Opportunity?

Become a Respite Volunteer through DARTS. Flexible scheduling 2-4 hours per visit. Support a family caregiver by spending time with an older adult who has a chronic illness or disability. DARTS is currently looking for a volunteers for a 97 yr old female with dementia and a 85 yr old male with dementia. For more information call 651-234-2254 or visit: dartsconnects.org/individual-volunteering/

COVID Testing—Free at-home COVID testing is available through the MN Department of Health. For more information, visit <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/athome.html>



**ST STEPHEN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

PLEASE NOTE: Links included in the eUpdate are not active—watch for a separate email that contains resources available and active links all in one handy document.

Thank You for your Support of our St. Stephen's Ministries ♥

By Mail | Online thru St Stephen's website | GIVE+Text (Text 844-907-2702) | GivePlus Vanco Mobile App

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