

# Fourth Sunday in Advent



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church  
Worship Service with Holy Communion  
Sunday, December 20, 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

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## WE PREPARE TO WORSHIP

**Prelude**

**Reflection on "Canticle of the Turning"**

**Bryon D.**

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**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

### “My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness”

ELW #251 vs. 1, 3

My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord;  
I sing my Savior's praise!  
You looked upon my lowliness,  
and I am full of grace.  
Now ev'ry land and ev'ry age  
this blessing shall proclaim—  
great wonders you have done for me,  
and holy is your name.

To Israel, your servant blest,  
your help is ever sure;  
the promise to our parents made  
their children will secure.  
Sing glory to the Holy One,  
give honor to the Word,  
and praise the Pow'r of the Most High,  
one God, by all adored.

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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)*

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**\* 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.**

**\* Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time  
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.**

*Light all four candles.*

**WE HEAR GOD'S WORD**

**First Reading**

**2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16**

1 Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2 the 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." 3 Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you." 4 But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: 5 Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 6 I 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. 7 Wherever 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?" 8 Now 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; 9 and 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. 10 And 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, 11 from 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. 16 Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Word of God, Word of Life.

***Thanks be to God***

## Second Reading

Luke 1:46b-55

"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
48 for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
50 His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
51 He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
53 he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
54 He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Word of God, Word of Life.

*Thanks be to God*

The Holy Gospel according to St Luke,  
**Glory to you, O Lord**

## \* Gospel

Luke 1:26-38

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.  
28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He 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. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The 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. 36 And 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. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then 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.

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

Sermon

Pastor John

## WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

"Lost in the Night"

ELW #243 vs. 2, 4

**Must we be vainly awaiting the morrow?  
Shall those who have light no light let us borrow,  
giving no heed to our burden of sorrow?  
Will you help us soon? Will you help us soon?**

**Light o'er the land of the needy is beaming;  
rivers of life through its deserts are streaming,  
bringing all peoples a Savior redeeming.  
Come and save us soon! Come and save us soon!**

Text: Nordic hymn; tr. Olav Lee, 1859-1943, alt.  
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\* **Prayers of Intercession**

*Petition response* Leader: ... Lord, in your mercy,

**“Come Now, O Prince of Peace”**

**ELW #247 vs. 4**

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

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\* **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.*

**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. 7, 8**

**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.**

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

Text: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite  
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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**

**“Joy to the World”**

**ELW #267 vs. 1, 3**

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.**

**No more let sin and sorrow grow  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.**

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748  
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**\* Dismissal**

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

**\* Postlude**

**Celebration of “Joy to the World”**

**Bryon Dockter**



## 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, Frances, Nicole, Dolores, Dan.**

*Each week* different families will be included in special prayers. Please hold in your prayers: **John, Jady, Lucy and Nora, Merrill, Cheryl, Barbara, Evelyn.**

*Each week* different missions that St. Stephen's supports through our Sunday offerings are included in our prayers. This week we offer prayers for **Neighbors Inc.** Neighbors is a non-profit social-service agency located in South St. Paul, providing emergency assistance and supportive assistance programs to low-income community members in the northern Dakota County communities of Inver Grove Heights, South St. Paul, West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Mendota, Sunfish Lake and Lilydale.

**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.*

## Leaders in Today's Service

Pastor .....	The Rev. Dr. John Snider
Lay Liturgist .....	Kim Richter
Director of Worship .....	Bryon Dockter
Song Leader .....	Deborah Ellis
Lectors .....	Bruce Meyers, Brett Culver
Audio Visual Ministry .....	Norm Goetzke, Dean Hostager, Jan Perkins
Prayer Chain .....	Rachel Circle, Mary Circle, Kathy Ericson, Abby Vavra
Altar Guild .....	Lori Ritt
Outdoor Street Sign .....	Jerry Thoreson



## Today's Altar Flowers

*In Honor of our 73rd Wedding Anniversary  
on December 27th*

Given by: Harlan and Joyce Rosvold



ST STEPHEN'S  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

**Senior Pastor John Snider | Associate Pastor of Discipleship Tim Thompson**  
1575 Charlton Street ■ West St. Paul, MN 55118



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