

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service

December 24, 2025



CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00 & 7:00 PM

Prelude

WELCOME

Stand

Opening Hymn

Christmas Carol booklet page 2

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

P Jesus is the Light of the world!

C **He is the Light no darkness can overcome.**

P At darkest night, we gather to celebrate the great light of our salvation.

C **With the heavenly host we sing, “Glory to God in the highest heaven.”**

P In Christ, God’s word is made flesh and lives among us.

C **With the shepherds, we will tell of the wonders we have seen and heard.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus’ presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

YOUTH SERMON

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

p 555

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

Christmas Carol booklet page 9

vs 1 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Gospel for the Day: Luke 2:1-20

p. 832

Christmas Carol booklet page 9

vs 3

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Sit

SERMON

Christmas Carol booklet page 5

“It Came Upon A Midnight Clear”

Sit

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH.

Pastor concludes each petition with:

“God of Grace,”

*Congregation responds: “**Hear our prayer.**”*

Pastor concludes with:

*Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.***

SHARING OF THE PEACE

If you are in our sanctuary please wave or give a peace sign to those around you. If you are worshipping online, please type a greeting of peace to others.

Stand

Words of Institution

OUR FATHER

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

Sit

COMMUNION:

All people who believe in Jesus Christ are welcome to come and receive Christ’s body and blood. Regardless of your church background or affiliation, you are welcome to come forward. We will begin with those seated on the pulpit side of the congregation then those seated on the keyboard side then those that are in the back section. You may come down the center aisle to receive the bread. Choose an individual cup (red is wine, white is grape juice) to receive and place your empty glass in the bowl as you return to your seat using the side aisles. Gluten free wafers are available upon request.

If you do not wish to receive communion, but wish to receive a blessing, please come forward and keep your hands at your sides.

Stand

Communion Hymns

“O Holy Night”

Verse 1 O holy night the stars are brightly shining
 It is the night of the dear Savior's birth
 Long lay the world in sin and error pining
 Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth
 A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices
 For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn

Chorus 1 Fall on your knees
 O hear the angel voices
 O night divine
 O night when Christ was born
 O night O holy night
 O night divine

Verse 2 Led by the light of faith serenely beaming
 With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand
 So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming
 Here came the wise men from Orient land
 The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger
 In all our trials born to be our Friend

Chorus 2 He knows our need
 To our weakness is no stranger
 Behold your King
 Before Him lowly bend
 Behold your King
 Before Him lowly bend

Verse 3 Truly He taught us to love one another
 His law is love and His gospel is peace
 Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother
 And in His name all oppression shall cease
 Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we
 Let all within us praise His holy name

Chorus 3 Christ is the Lord
 O praise His name forever
 His power and glory
 Evermore proclaim
 His power and glory
 Evermore proclaim

“O Holy Night” Adolphe Charles Adam | John Sullivan Dwight | Placide Cappeau © Words & Music: Public Domain CCLI License # 450446 CCLI Song # 32015

“Mary Did You Know”

Mary did you know
That your baby boy
Would one day walk on water
Mary did you know
That your baby boy
Would save our sons and daughters
Did you know
That your baby boy
Has come to make you new
This Child that you delivered
Will soon deliver you

Mary did you know
That your baby boy
Would give sight to the blind man
Mary did you know
That your baby boy
Would calm a storm with His hand
Did you know
That your baby boy
Has walked where angels trod
And when you kiss your little baby
You've kissed the face of God
Oh Mary did you know

The blind will see
The deaf will hear
The dead will live again
The lame will leap
The dumb will speak
The praises of the Lamb

Oh Mary did you know
That your baby boy
Is Lord of all creation
Mary did you know
That your baby boy
Will one day rule the nations
Did you know
That your baby boy
Is heaven's perfect Lamb
And the sleeping Child you're holding
Is the great I Am

“Mary Did You Know?” Words and Music: Mark Lowry and Buddy Green © 1991 Word Music ASaP & Rufus Music ASCAP

Stand

BLESSING

- P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
- C **Amen**

Prayer

**Incarnate God, you are among us at this table.
May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts
the mystery of your presence.
Move us to discover the wonders of your love
in the everyday moments of our lives,
through Christ born in us.
Amen.**

SHARING THE LIGHT

Candles are lit. Please keep lit candles upright and tip unlit candle into the flame.

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav’nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light
Radiant beams from your holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth!!

BENEDICTION

- P May the Word that Mary brought to birth
carry you into new and abundant life.
- C Amen.**
- P May the Word that Joseph cradled in his arms
enfold you with love and strength.
- C Amen.**
- P May the Word that angels proclaimed in song
bring harmony to our world.
- C Amen.**
- P And the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.
- C Amen.**

Candles are extinguished.

Closing Hymn

Christmas Carol booklet page 19

“Joy to the World”

- A Glory to God in the highest!
- C And peace to God’s people on earth!**
- A Go in joy, Embody God’s redeeming grace.
- C Thanks be to God!**

Postlude

*Candles may be left in the basket outside the sanctuary doors.
Please return Christmas Carol booklets in the green basket by the door.*

December 24, 2025
Christmas Eve

Salvation to All

“Good news” is a familiar phrase for Christians, but in the world outside the bible the Greek word we translate as “bringing . . . good news” (Luke 2:10) was used to announce a new emperor. The Emperor Augustus commands that the world be counted, and those with the least are required to do the most to fulfill the requirements of those in power. The scene at the manger, however, is anything but imperial. In Bethlehem, God’s power is revealed in weakness, and the people who count include even the migrant laborers keeping watch over their flocks by night.

What does it mean this Christmas for us to hear that God is found in the hidden, the neglected, the immodest places of the world? What does it mean for us this year to know that when God takes a census, all the people of the world matter as much as any citizen of any empire?

The Nativity of Our Lord is the story of God’s reign spilling over the boundaries set by the powerful people of the world and into the margins. Dark nights and fragile infants interrupted by migrant laborers and choirs of angels point to a vision of the world as it should be, where “being connected” to the right people is replaced by being interconnected through a spirit of unity that brings us all out of the margins and into the center of life. In the infant Jesus, God declares a new standard for power, a word of hope, “good news” for all who are fragile, all who are weak, all who are overlooked, all who are despised, all who are abandoned, all who are homeless, all who are hovering between life and death. The festival of the incarnation is indeed “salvation to all” (Titus 2:11).

SERVING TONIGHT

Pastor Beth Ferne Johnson
Scott Ballard, Director of Music

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