

# St Stephen

a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Rev. Robert G. Schaefer, Pastor



Encouraging and  
strengthening faith in Jesus,  
and sharing the joy of God's love.

December 20, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:15am

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## Holy Communion

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### Introduction to the Fourth Sunday of Advent

*The mood of Advent shifts on December 17 from looking toward the return of Christ in glory to preparing to celebrate the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."*



### Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

### Prelude

### Welcome

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*The assembly stands and turns toward the baptismal font. 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, the Lord of Israel who comes to set us free, the mighty Savior who comes to show mercy, the Dawn from on high who guides us into peace.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Born of Blessed Mary, born under the law, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of sin: let us come to him that he may heal us and set us free:

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Lord Jesus, you are mighty God and Prince of Peace: Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are Son of God and Son of Mary: Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are Word made flesh and splendor of the Father: Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

*The presiding minister announces God's forgiveness.*

Almighty and merciful God grant you healing, pardon, and forgiveness of all your sins.

**Amen.**

***During this time the CDC and the Bishop's Office recommend against congregational singing. In the building, the ensemble will sing verses 1 and 2, on our behalf as the procession moves to the Advent wreath. The words and music are here for your meditation, please do not sing out loud.***

**GATHERING SONG: My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness ELW #251**

***Following verses 1 & 2, the wreath is blessed and the second candle is lit. The blessing concludes:***

... Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

**Amen.**

***Then the ensemble sings verse 3.***



1 My soul pro-claims your great-ness, Lord; I sing my Sav - ior's praise!  
2 To all who live in ho - ly fear your mer - cy ev - er flows.  
3 To Is - ra - el, your ser - vant blest, your help is ev - er sure;



You looked up - on my low - li - ness, and I am full of grace.  
With might - y arm you dash the proud, their schem - ing hearts ex - pose.  
the prom - ise to our par - ents made their chil - dren will se - cure.



Now ev - 'ry land and ev - 'ry age this bless - ing shall pro - claim—  
The ruth - less you have cast a - side, the low - ly throned in - stead;  
Sing glo - ry to the Ho - ly One, give hon - or to the Word,



great won - ders you have done for me, and ho - ly is your name.  
the hun - gry filled with all good things, the rich sent off un - fed.  
and praise the Pow'r of the Most High, one God, by all a - dored.

Text: *With One Voice*, 1995, based on the Magnificat  
Music: KINGSFOLD, English folk tune  
Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress

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## APOSTOLIC GREETING

*The presiding minister and assembly greet each other.*

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy spirit, be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept, then the presiding minister leads the prayer.*

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.**

*The assembly sits.*



## Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading and song.

## FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

A reading from Second Samuel.

<sup>1</sup>Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup>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.” <sup>3</sup>Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.”

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup>Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>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?” <sup>8</sup>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; <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>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, <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM Luke 1:46b-55

<sup>46b</sup>My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, <sup>47</sup>my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup>for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.

**From this day all generations will call me blessed:**

<sup>49</sup>you, the Almighty, have done great things for me and holy is your name.

<sup>50</sup>**You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.**

<sup>51</sup>You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,

<sup>52</sup>**casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.**

<sup>53</sup>You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup>**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,**

**to remember the promise of mercy,**

<sup>55</sup>the promise made to our forbears, to Abraham and his children forever.

## SECOND READING: Romans 16:25-27

A reading from Romans.

<sup>25</sup>Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—<sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

L: The word of the Lord. C: **Thanks be to God.**

*After a brief silence, the assembly stands to welcome the gospel.*

***The Gospel Acclamation is sung by a leader***

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the  
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

## GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38

P: ✝ The Holy Gospel, according to Luke.

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

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>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. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no

end.” <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” <sup>35</sup>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. <sup>36</sup>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. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God.” <sup>38</sup>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.

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

*The assembly is seated.*

**SERMON**

**The Rev. Robert G. Schaefer**

*The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.*

***The ensemble sings all verses of the following hymn on behalf of the assembly.***

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

**The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came**

**ELW# 265**



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,  
 2 “For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,  
 3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;  
 4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born



with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:  
 all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;  
 “To me be as it pleas - eth God,” she said.  
 in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



“All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,  
 thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,  
 “My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God’s ho - ly name.”  
 and Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say:



most high - ly fa - vored la - dy.”  
 most high - ly fa - vored la - dy.”    Glo - ri - a!  
 Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,  
 “Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy.”

**INSTALLATION OF LEADERS**

*The assembly is seated. The presiding minister addresses the assembly. Following this address, the presiding minister addresses those being installed.*

On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I ask you: Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the offices to which you have been elected?

**Response:** I will, and I ask God to help me.

*The assembly stands. Those being installed face the assembly. The presiding minister addresses the assembly.*

People of God, I ask you: Will you support these, your elected leaders, and will you share in the mutual ministry that Christ has given to all who are baptized?

**We will, and we ask God to help us.**

*Those being installed face the presiding minister, who addresses them.*

I now declare you installed as council members of this congregation. Almighty God bless you, and direct your days and your deeds in peace, that you may be faithful servants of Christ.

**Amen.**

## **NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: On this final Sunday of Advent, we join in prayer that the God of power and might will come quickly to this weary world, hearing our prayers for everyone in need.

*After each petition of the prayer is said:*

A: Hear our prayer, O God: **C: Come and save us soon.**

P: Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of the son of blessed Mary and your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **C: Amen.**

## PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **C: And also with you.**

*The assembly sits.*



## MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

## Invitation to Offering

## SETTING THE TABLE

**The Offering Song is sung by a leader on behalf of the assembly.**

### OFFERING SONG:

### Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

ELW# 490



1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and trem - bling stand;  
2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on earth he stood,  
3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van-guard on the way;  
4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim with sleep - less eye,



pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed, for with bless - ing in his hand  
Lord of lords in hu - man ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,  
as the Light of light, de - scend - ing from the realms of end - less day,  
veil their fac - es to the pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry:



Christ our God to earth de - scend - ing comes full hom - age to de - mand.  
he will give to all the faith - ful his own self for heav'n - ly food.  
comes, the pow'rs of hell to van - quish, as the dark - ness clears a - way.  
"Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!"

*The assembly stands.*

## OFFERING PRAYER

A: Let us pray. Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. Hear our prayer in the name of the one for whom we wait, Jesus, our Emmanuel. **C: Amen.**

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*The presiding minister greets the assembly and invites all present to give thanks.*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

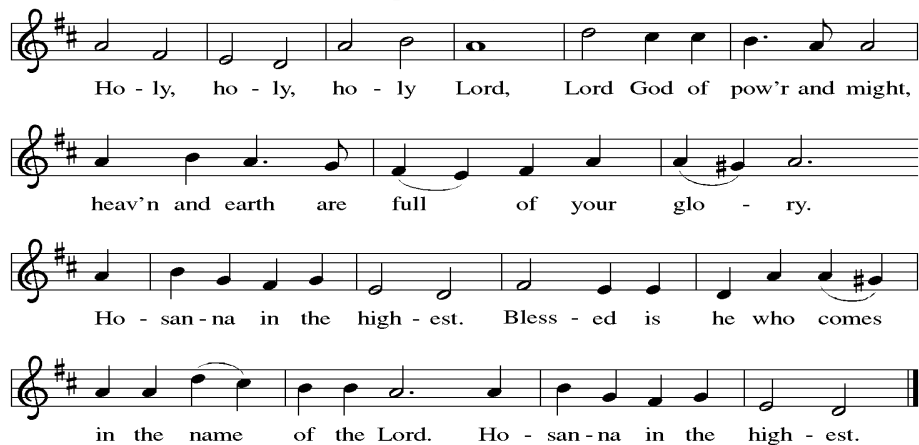
Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*The presiding minister continues to give thanks:*

...Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup...We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit...Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours... one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.:

**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.**



# Communion

*The bread is broken for the communion.*

P: This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here. Taste and see, the Lord is good.

*The assembly is seated.*

**Lamb of God and the communion song are sung by a leader on behalf of the assembly.**

## Lamb of God

Cor - de - ro de Dios, tú que qui-tas el pe-ca-do del mun-do;  
O Lamb of . . God, you . . take a-way the sin of the world; . .

ten pie-dad de no - so-tros, ten pie-dad de no - so-tros.  
have . . mer-cy up - on us, have . . mer-cy up - on us.

Cor - de - ro de Dios, tú que qui-tas el pe-ca-do del mun-do;  
O Lamb of . . God, you . . take a-way the sin of the world; . .

ten pie-dad de no - so-tros, ten pie-dad de no - so-tros.  
have . . mer-cy up - on us, have . . mer-cy up - on us.

Cor - de - ro de Dios, tú que qui-tas el pe-ca-do del mun-do;  
O Lamb of . . God, you . . take a-way the sin of the world; . .

da - nos tu paz, da - nos tu paz.  
grant us your peace, grant us your peace.

## Communion Song:

## Here I Am, Lord

ELW# 574

1 "I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my peo - ple cry.  
2 "I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my peo - ple's pain.  
3 "I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.

All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.  
I have wept for love of them. They turn a - way.  
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.

I, who made the stars of night, I will make their dark-ness bright.  
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love a - lone.  
Fin-est bread I will pro-vide till their hearts be sat - is - fied.



Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?"  
 I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?"  
 I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?"



Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you



call-ing in the night. I will go, Lord, if you



lead me. I will hold your peo - ple in my heart.

*The assembly stands and the assisting minister leads the prayer after communion.*

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

God most high, whose handmaid bore the Word made flesh: we thank you that in this sacrament of our redemption you visit us with your Holy Spirit and overshadow us by your power; strengthen us to walk with Mary the joyful path of obedience and so to bring forth the fruits of holiness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



## Sending

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

## Announcements

### BLESSING

Christ the Son of God, born of the blessed virgin Mary, fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will; and may

*All may make the sign of the cross as they receive God's blessing.*

Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

***Verses 1-3 of the Sending Song is sung by the ensemble on behalf of the assembly. The assembly turns to face the cross as it passes by.***

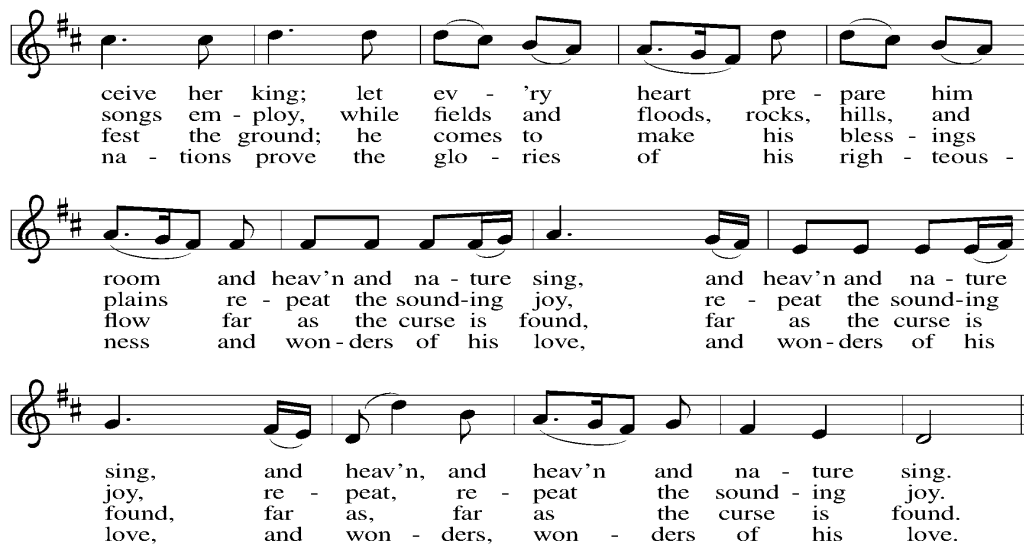
## SENDING SONG:

### Joy to the World

ELW# 267



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



**DISMISSAL**

A: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.



*In response to the amazing love, mercy and grace of God, St. Stephen Lutheran Church is a community that openly welcomes all who are seeking God's divine love and grace. All are welcome in this place regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation or gender identity, economic situation or life situation, marital or relationship status, or your doubts about faith and church. Our unity is in Christ. Your family, children, friends, spouses and partners are welcome. Your diversity and uniqueness enriches and expands our community. We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation.*

**IN OUR PRAYERS...**

In our prayers today are these members of our homebound and others of our parish family in need of healing: George, Carol Chmelynski, Lisa Castaneda, Kelly Jacobson, Carol Jacobson, Marti Stroberg, Dolores Lauterberg, Laurel Blake, Dorothy Johnson, James Loggins, Don Schutt, Normagene Richardson, Mildred Grady, Rosie & Jimmy Fennelli, Pat Engle.

**PRAYERS FOR FRIENDS OF THE PARISH**

✠ San & Debbie Seckel, Lyndsay & Jody Webb, Shauna Widman, Craig, Aiden, Chandler, Becky, Braemen, Cheryl, Robert, Janice, Jerry, Betty, Sharon, Rae, Carol, Taylor, Nettie, Ed, Donna, Kristi, and Milena ✠ Carol, Valerie, Jason, Melissa, Jon, Carlyne, James, Camille, Greg, and Wanda.

**IN A FACILITY OR HOMEBOUND:**

Evelyn Braun – 6152 Verde Trail Room 106 Boca Raton, Fl. 33433  
 Jim Loggins - John Knox Village – Woodlands 700 SW 4th St, Pompano Beach, FL 33060  
 Bud Danker - 3020 N. Ridge Road Apartment W-316 Ellicott City, MD 21043.

***Welcome to in person worship!!! Please respect our guidelines:***

We expect everyone to use face masks when in the building. If you forget your face covering, we have extras for you, but no one can enter the building without a face covering and they must be worn at all times except at the moment of communion. Face coverings and water bottles will be available near the entrance to the nave for those who need them. Initially, following CDC guidelines, all congregational singing will be limited to an individual or ensemble who will sing on behalf of the assembly. For now, only the verbal greeting of Peace will be exchanged in the liturgy. Sharing the peace for now should be nothing more than exchanging a simple bow to those on your right and left. There will be one communion station, single file, following the ushers' directions and the markings on the floor to maintain social distancing. At the time of holy communion, exit the pew via the side isles, and go to the rear of the church. As you round the corner to the central isle there will be

another touchless sanitizing station. Please sanitize your hands and proceed down the center isle to receive the sacrament following the floor markers. The pastor distributing the host will try to avoid touching communicants' hands as much as possible. Communicants are reminded to come forward with flat outstretched hands.



### ***Christmas Eve at St. Stephen: reservations requested please...***

As usual, we have two services scheduled for Christmas Eve:

**5:30pm**      **Family Christ Mass with Candlelight and Children's Message**

**7:30pm**      **Festival Sung Christ Mass with Candlelight**

Unfortunately, this year, because of the pandemic, you will need reservations to attend one of these services because of the limited space. Each service will be limited to around 50 people. **You can reserve space by calling the office and speaking with Aidee from 9:30am—12:30pm any weekday beginning on December 1. The office number is 954-942-4473.** If you call outside of office hours, please leave your name, your phone number, and the number of people in your party. Reservations will be on a first come first served basis. Both Masses will be livestreamed on Facebook and the website as well.

### ***2021 Congregation Council***

Congregation council membership consists of the Pastor and between five and nine members of St. Stephen. (The years represent when term on council expires)

President:	Lynda Smith (2021)	Vice-President:	Erika Flanigan (2021)
Secretary:	Natalie Prego (2023)	Treasurer:	Eric Castaneda (2021)
At Large:	Jake Waldecki (2022), Randy Mottesheard (2022), Kathy Hopkins (2023)		

### ***Change for Change Tower: Discretionary Fund***

As the holidays approach, we dedicate the Change for Change Tower to support a new ongoing Pastor's Discretionary Fund. During this difficult time, it will allow the pastor to help with emergency needs in the community and in the congregation. This would include such things as emergency fuel for a stranded motorist, food vouchers for the hungry on a day the Holy Grill is not serving, bus passes, emergency overnight accommodations, or other special emergency needs that might arise. Please give generously to get this fund going. **Bring your loose change and bills to church and let's fill up the Change for Change Tower. You may give on line by following the link on our homepage at: [www.ststephenlutheran.net](http://www.ststephenlutheran.net)**



# Live Generously

TAKE HOLD OF THE LIFE THAT REALLY IS LIFE  
1 TIMOTHY 6:18-19

Please take some time to pray about your gift to Christ and his church in 2021, and then return the commitment card to the marked box on Sunday morning, drop it in the office mail box, or send via the mail to St. Stephen between now and the Baptism of our Lord, January 10.

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