



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 6, 2020

Second Sunday of Advent

10:15am

Holy Communion

Introduction to the Second Sunday of Advent

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.



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.**

A voice cries out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.' So let us listen, and turn to the Lord in penitence and faith.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Turn to us again, O God our savior, and let your anger depart from us: Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Show us your compassion, O Lord, and grant us your salvation: Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Your salvation is near for those that fear you, that glory may dwell in our land: 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:

On Jordan's Stormy Bank I Stand

ELW #437

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 On Jor-dan's storm-y bank I stand, and cast a wish-ful eye
2 All o'er those wide ex-tend-ed plains shines one e-ter-nal day;
3 No chill-ing winds or poi-s'nous breath can reach that health-ful shore;
4 When shall I reach that hap-py place and be for-ev-er blest?



to Ca-naan's fair and hap-py land, where my pos-ses-sions lie.
there God the Son for-ev-er reigns and scat-ters night a-way.
sick-ness and sor-row, pain and death, are felt and feared no more.
When shall I see my Sav-ior's face and in God's bos-om rest?



I am bound for the prom-ised land, I am bound for the prom-ised land;



oh, who will come and go with me? I am bound for the prom-ised land.

Text: Samuel Stennett, 1727-1795

Music: PROMISED LAND, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835; adapt. Rigdon M. McIntosh, 1836-1899

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 our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you 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: Isaiah 40:1-11

A reading from Isaiah.

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 85:1-2, 8-13

¹You have been gracious to your land, O LORD;
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

²**You have forgiven the iniquity of your people
and blotted out all their sins.**

⁸I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;

for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you.

⁹Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell in our land.

¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

¹¹Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

¹²The LORD will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.

¹³Righteousness shall go before the LORD
and shall prepare for God a pathway.

SECOND READING: 2 Peter 3:8-15a

A reading from 2 Peter.

⁸Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. ¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ^{15a}and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

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: Mark 1:1-8

P: ✝ The Holy Gospel, according to Mark.

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

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophet

Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" ⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

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 verses 1& 2 of the following hymn on behalf of the assembly.

HYMN OF THE DAY

There's a Voice in the Wilderness

ELW# 255

1 There's a voice in the wil - der - ness cry - ing, a
 2 O Je - ru - sa - lem, her - ald good tid - ings, as -
 3 But the word of our Sav - ior is faith - ful, the

call from the ways un - trod: Pre - pare in the des - ert a
 cend to the heights and sing! Pro - claim to a des - o - late
 arm of our God is strong, who stands in the midst of the

high - way, a high - way for our God!
 peo - ple the com - ing of their king.
 na - tions and soon will right the wrong.

The val - leys shall be ex - alt - ed, the
 Like flow'rs of the field we per - ish, like
 Lord, feed your flock like a shep - herd, the

loft - y hills brought low; make straight all the crook - ed
 grass our works de - cay; the pow'r and the pomp of
 lambs so gent - ly hold; in pas - tures of peace now

plac - es where God, our God, may go!
 na - tions shall pass like a dream a - way.
 lead them, and bring them to your fold.

Text: James Lewis Milligan, 1876-1961, alt.
 Music: ASCENSION, Henry Hugh Bancroft, 1904-1988
 Music © Estate of Eldred Bancroft, B. Burrows, Executor.

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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: Let us pray that the God of power and might, will comfort all people and come quickly to this weary world, hearing our prayers for everyone in need.

After each petition of the prayer is said:

A: O God, be gracious to us:

C: In mercy, restore us.

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

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.



MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Invitation to Offering

SETTING THE TABLE

The Offering Song, verses 1, 2, & 4 is sung by a leader on behalf of the assembly.

OFFERING SONG:

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

ELW# 241



1 O Lord, how shall I meet you, how wel - come you a - right?
 2 I lay in fet - ters, groan - ing; you came to set me free.
 3 Love caused your in - car - na - tion; love brought you down to me.
 4 Re - jice, then, you sad - heart - ed, who sit in deep - est gloom,



Your peo - ple long to greet you, my hope, my heart's de - light!
 I stood, my shame be - moan - ing; you came to hon - or me.
 Your thirst for my sal - va - tion pro - cured my lib - er - ty.
 who mourn your joys de - part - ed and trem - ble at your doom.



Oh, kin - dle, Lord most ho - ly, your lamp with - in my breast
 A glo - rious crown you give me, a trea - sure safe on high
 Oh, love be - yond all tell - ing, that led you to em - brace
 All hail the Lord's ap - pear - ing! O glo - rious Sun, now come,



to do in spir - it low - ly all that may please you best.
 that will not fail or leave me as earth - ly rich - es fly.
 in love, all love ex - cel - ling, our lost and fall - en race.
 send forth your beams so cheer - ing and guide us safe - ly home.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607-1676; tr. composite
 Music: WIE SOLL ICH DICH EMPFANGEN, Johann Crüger, 1598-1662

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.

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:

Lost in the Night

ELW# 243

1 Lost in the night do the peo - ple yet lan - guish,
 2 Must we be vain - ly a - wait - ing the mor - row?
 3 Sor - row - ing wan - d'ers, in dark - ness yet dwell - ing,
 4 Light o'er the land of the need - y is beam - ing;
 long - ing for morn - ing the dark - ness to van - quish,
 Shall those who have light no light let us bor - row,
 dawned has the day of a ra - diance ex - cel - ling,
 riv - ers of life through its des - erts are stream - ing,
 plain - tive - ly sigh - ing with hearts full of an - guish.
 giv - ing no heed to our bur - den of sor - row?
 death's deep - est shad - ows for - ev - er dis - pel - ling.
 bring - ing all peo - ples a Sav - ior re - deem - ing.
 Will not day come soon? Will not day come soon?
 Will you help us soon? Will you help us soon?
 Christ is com - ing soon! Christ is com - ing soon!
 Come and save us soon! Come and save us soon!

Text: Nordic hymn; tr. Olav Lee, 1859-1943, alt.
Music: LOST IN THE NIGHT, Finnish folk tune
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The assembly stands and the assisting minister leads the prayer after communion.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. Holy One, we give you thanks that in this bread and cup we have feasted again on your endless love. Let that love overflow more and more in our lives, that we may be messengers to prepare your way, harvesters of justice and righteousness, and bearers of your eternal Word, our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Sending

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

Announcements

BLESSING

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, 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.

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:

He Came Down

ELW# 253



- 1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
- 2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
- 3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
- 4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have light; hal - le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.
he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have joy;

Text: Cameroon traditional
Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional

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

✠ Belinda, Marjorie, Janice, Letty Gonzalez, Gene, Annette, Joanna, Susan, Betty, Bruce, Bill, Carol, Eric Hecker, E. Kuckert, Rose Blair, The Chantal family ✠ Gene, Chris, Amanda, Betty, Joanna, Susan, Annette, Madison, Mason, Betty, Chuck, Denny, Bill, George, Jordan, Carol Patterson, Randy, Missy, Ted, Wanda, Greg, Jason, Melissa, Jon, Carolyne, Jim, Camille, Ann, Valerie, Gino and family.

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.
- Offering plates will be placed on a stand as people enter and exit. Greeters will stand behind a table warmly welcoming worshippers from a distance.
- We continue to encourage electronic giving.
- Outside doors and bathroom doors will be propped open, so no one touches a doorknob or handle.
- 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.
- Following the Liturgy, the pastor will be present outside the outer doors to greet people, but will remain socially distanced with no physical contact.

Online Advent Evening Prayer this Wednesday!



In addition to Advent Sunday in-person worship, we continue to gather online for Advent Evening Prayer live from the sanctuary at 5:00pm on Wednesdays, December 9, and 16. This week, in our series on *Praying with the Saints*, we will consider St. Lucy and her Christmas tradition that is particularly popular in Scandinavian countries. These services will be live streamed on Facebook and the St. Stephen website. These services will also be recorded for later viewing.

Join us live at 5 online Wednesdays in Advent!

Time for poinsettias to beautify our sanctuary at Christmas



Now through December 13, we will be selling poinsettias as a fundraiser. The poinsettias can be dedicated to loved ones and will decorate our altar during the Christmas season. If you wish to leave them for the duration of the Christmas season, we would welcome that! Christmas will continue this year through January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany. Donation: \$10.00. You may bring or send the money to church or give online, using the website on the giving page.



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 954-942-4474.** 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.

Change for Change Tower: Discretionary Fund

As the holidays approach, during the months of November and December we will 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**



Congregation Meeting to elect new Council Members, next Sunday, December 13.

Our constitution calls for us to elect congregation council members in December. This year the pandemic threatens our in-person gatherings. Our plan for this meeting to elect council members include both an in-person meeting following the Eucharist on the Third Sunday in Advent and a live online Zoom meeting for those who are not comfortable gathering in the church. Online participants will be able to view the proceedings, speak, and vote online. The link to participate online will be sent this week in the E-Update.

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