

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

December 24, 2017

CHRISTMAS EVE

5:30 p.m.

Rev. Pedro Suarez, Bishop Rev. Dr. Sidney Nelson, Interim Pastor **Welcome** to our community of faith on this Eve of Christmas. On a long winter evening we gather to proclaim the coming of the light. Amid our broken world we proclaim that the prince of peace is born among us. God comes to us in human flesh--in Christ's body and blood--so that we may be bearers of divine light to all the world. This is a new beginning in the story of God with us. After this evening, we hope you will continue the story with us here or in another community of faith. Keep the pages turning...

~WE GATHER~

MUSICAL PRELUDE

WELCOME AND INVOCATION

P: In the name of the father, and of the son, (†) and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

A CHRISTMAS LITANY:

When the time had come

P: We were heavy with sorrow, P: We were deep in the night, P: We were silent with sadness,	C: but joy interrupted. C: but a star appeared. C: but the heavens rang. And the splendor shone around them when the time had fully come.
P: We were hardened by conflict,P: We were frightened by shadows,P: We were haunted by fears,	C: but love intervened. C: but light took them away. C: but a child brought us hope. And she laid him in a manger when the time had fully come.
P: We were dismal and defeated,P: We were weary and complaining,P: We were doubtful and confused,	C: but faith set us on fire.C: but our hearts discovered praise.C: but a door to life was opened. And the guiding star went before them when the time had fully come.
P: We were arrogant and angry,P: We were cruel, crude, and clumsy,P: We were selfish, narrow, greedy,	C: but his innocence disarmed us.C: but his grace made all things new.C: but his joy we had to share. And they offered him their treasured gifts when the time had fully come.
P: We were sheep, who had lost their way, P: We were strangers without a country, P: We were children far from home,	C: but the shepherd knew our names. C: but our kingdom came to us. C: but God sent his Son to guide. And the Word was flesh among us when the time had fully come.

~ written by Kenneth I. Morse, from "In Straw and Story," p.80, Brethren Press, copyright 1977.

THE GREETING

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.

P: Let us pray together:

C: 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.

P: You may be seated.

~WE LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD~

Narrator: In the Genesis story, we hear that God created the world with language. God *said*, "Let there be light." God *said*, "Let there be night and day." God *said*, "It is good." Then, in the first chapter in the Gospel of John, we hear how this language, the Word, is with God and Jesus.

John 1:1-4, 9 -13, 18b (Reader #1)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 9 The true light, which helps everyone to see, was coming into the world. 10 Jesus was in the world, and Word that shaped the world was in him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. 18 It is Jesus, a child of God, who by being close to the Father's heart, has made God known.

SONG: "It's Christmas Coming Again"

[The Advent candles are lit]

Refrain

It's coming, it's coming, it's Christmas coming again; it's coming, it's coming, it's Christmas coming again.

Ya viene, ya viene, ya viene la Navidad; ya viene, ya viene, ya viene la Navidad.

- 1 Light a candle for love, light a candle for love; light a candle for love, light a candle for love; and light up the world with the love of the Lord; and light up the world with the love of the Lord. R
- 2 Light a candle for peace, light a candle for peace; light a candle for peace, light a candle for peace; and light up the world with the peace of the Lord; and light up the world with the peace of the Lord. R
- 3 Light a candle for joy, light a candle for joy; light a candle for joy, light a candle for joy; and light up the world with the joy of the Lord; and light up the world with the joy of the Lord. R
- 4 Light a candle for hope, light a candle for hope; light a candle for hope, light a candle for hope; and light up the world with the hope of the Lord; and light up the world with the hope of the Lord. R

Narrator: In the 1st chapter of the Gospel of Luke, we learn of Mary's willingness to work with God even though what is being asked of her will not be easy. Being pregnant when not married is against the rules where and when she lives. There are some very hard consequences for breaking these rules – the worst consequence being death.

Luke 1:26 - 38 (Reader #2)

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, the messenger of God, Gabriel, was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to an unmarried woman engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The young woman's name was Mary. 28 And Gabriel said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But Mary was much perplexed by his words and wondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 Gabriel 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 asked, "How can this be, since I am unmarried?" 35 The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; 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 messenger of God departed from her.

SONG: "HERE I AM" (verses 1 and 3)

 "I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry. All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.
 I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright. Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?"

Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

3 "I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame. I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied. I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?" *Refrain*

Narrator: The place of Jesus' birth is in Bethlehem, a small town a few miles south of Jerusalem. But Bethlehem was not Joseph or Mary's hometown. They had to go to Bethlehem because Caesar Augustus had made a law that everyone must be counted in the towns where their great-great grandparents (or ancestors) had been born. This was a long trip to travel by foot (about 60 miles or 3 days' time). It would've been even more difficult since Mary was pregnant. When Mary and Joseph finally made it to Bethlehem, the hotel was already filled with people and there was no place for Mary and Joseph to stay. But there was a stable, where the animals rested, that Mary and Joseph were allowed to rest in as well.

SONG: "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem" (versus 1 and 2 only)

[Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus enter the sanctuary and sit in front of the altar]

- 1 O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by; yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
- 2 For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love. O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!

Narrator: In this stable, with only Joseph to help her, Mary gave birth to a baby boy. She wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger. Mary and Joseph named him Jesus.

SONG: "Away in a Manger" (verses 1 and 2)

[Angel with star move behind Mary and Joseph]

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
- 2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes. I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Narrator: Now, it was night time and in the fields nearby, shepherds were watching their flocks. Then an angel stood before the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shone around all of them. And the shepherds were terrified. But the angel of the Lord said to them: Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." Immediately after the angel stopped speaking, there were suddenly many angels praising God and saying "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

SONG: "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

[All other "angels" come to surround the baby Jesus]

1 Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king; peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled." Joyful, all your nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies; with angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

- 2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord, late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see! Hail, incarnate deity! Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*
- 3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness! Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.

Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die, born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth. *Refrain*

Narrator: Then the angels left the shepherds and the shepherds took a deep breath (or maybe five or six deep breaths). Then they looked at each other and said: "We better go see this baby!"

SONG: "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

[All "shepherds" move to front during singing]

1 O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; come and behold him, born the king of angels:

Refrain

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

- 2 The highest, most holy, light of light eternal, born of a virgin, a mortal he comes; Son of the Father now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*
- 3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God in the highest: *Refrain*
- 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n! Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: *Refrain*

Narrator: So this stable that Mary, Joseph and Jesus were staying was, as you heard earlier, home to some of the animals of the village. And these animals must've been pretty curious as to what a baby was doing in their feeding trough. If animals have thoughts, some of them might have sounded like this, "Hey this baby sure is cute, but where did our dinner go!?" and "What are all these humans doing in our home! Let's smell them and find out!" So it's quite likely that these animals may have gathered around Mary, Joseph, Jesus and the shepherds for a closer look.

SONG: "Do you hear what I hear" Versus 1 & 2

[All "animals" move to front during singing]

- Said the night wind to the little lamb, do you see what I see Way up in the sky, little lamb, do you see what I see A star, a star, dancing in the night With a tail as big as a kite, with a tail as big as a kite
- 2 Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy, do you hear what I hear Ringing through the sky, shepherd boy, do you hear what I hear A song, a song, high above the trees With a voice as big as the sea, with a voice as big as the sea

Narrator: Now when the shepherds saw Mary, Joseph and Jesus in the stable, and saw that what the angel had said to them was true, they went out and made it known to whomever they met. Which means it's very possible that some of the townspeople went to the stable that very night to see and maybe even help Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus because of what the shepherds had told them.

SONG: "Go tell it on the mountain"

Refrain

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere; go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

- 1 While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night, behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *Refrain*
- 2 The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*
- 3 Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born; and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

REFLECTION

Rev. Pedro Suarez

~WE RESPOND~

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.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

After each petition of the prayer is said:

- A: Lord, in your mercy,
- C: Hear our prayer.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

- P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
- C: And also with you.

Greet one another with the peace of the Lord.

- WELCOME TO THE LORD'S TABLE ~

MUSICAL OFFERING



OFFERING RECEPTION: "Angels We Have Heard on High" (Verses 1 & 2)

OFFERING PRAYER

A: Let us pray. Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

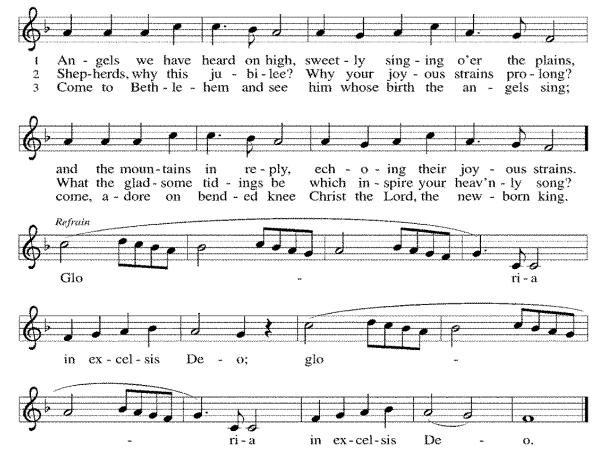
THE GREAT THANKSGIVING The Dialogue

P: The Lord be with you.P: Lift up your hearts.P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: And also with you.C: We lift them up to the Lord.C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Eucharist Song: "Angels We Have Heard on High" (Verse 3)



Eucharist Prayer

P: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

C: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

P: With this bread and cup, we remember your Word dwelling among us,

full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

C: Come, Lord Jesus.

P: Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on Earth.

C: Come, Holy Spirit.

P: All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

P: And now, we come to You in prayer, as our Savior Jesus has taught us:

C: 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 of Communion

P: Christ invites you to a place of honor at this banquet. Welcome to the feast.

We believe Jesus Christ is present in the bread and wine by his Word of Promise. All baptized Christians are invited to participate in the celebration of God's forgiving love, strengthening faith, and grace-filled hope. Those who are not baptized and children not yet communing may come forward for a blessing (please cross your arms on your chest if you desire a blessing).

Reception of Communion The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**

Communion distribution is continuous. Please come forward by the center aisle and receive the bread in your hands as you hear the words "The body of Christ, given for you" to which you may respond, "Amen." You may then dip the bread into the cup as you hear the words "The blood of Christ, shed for you," to which you may respond, "Amen." Note that the communion wine is alcohol-free. Please indicate if you need gluten-free elements.

"What a Feast of Love"

"Joy to the World"

ELW 487

ELW 267

Instrumental Music

Candle Lighting

When all have communed, please remain seated while the candles are lit. The ushers will light their candles, and in turn, will share the light with the congregation. When an usher comes to your pew, the person on the end lights their candle from the usher's candle, and each person in the pew lights their candle in turn. Please tip the unlit candle into the lit candle. This will keep wax from dripping. (The wax is hot and will burn your skin, and it is hard to get out of fabric when cooled.)

Candle Light Song: "Silent Night, Holy Night!"



11

Cesar Vidaud

~WE ARE SENT FORTH~

Christmas Benediction

P: May this eternal truth be always on our hearts: that the God who breathed this world into being, placed stars into the heavens, and designed a butterfly's wing is the God who entrusted his Son to the care of ordinary people, became vulnerable that we might know how strong is the wonder of Love, a mystery so deep it is impossible to grasp, a mystery so beautiful it is impossible to ignore. And may almighty God, Father, Son, (†) and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

The Sending

A: Go in the peace that this birth brings. Christ the Savior is born! **C: Thanks be to God!**

A: Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere! C: We will go and tell! Amen!



WELCOME! Christmas is the one of the three great celebrations of the Christian year. Whether tradition, duty, curiosity, or faith brought you here, you are most welcome. On behalf of the whole Saint Stephen family, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2018!

IN OUR PRAYERS

In our prayers today are these members of our homebound and others of our parish family in need of healing: Rudy Koch, Laurel Blake, Jim Loggins, Barb Taylor, Diane Adler, Jean Rogers, Katie, Roy and Barbara Kaptain, Lisa Allen, Bob & Jane Reinhold, C.C., Trudy DiCarlo and Marie Koach.

Prayers for Friends of the Church: Barbara Gummo, Marjorie, Jerry, Cheryl, Robert, Craig, Henry Q., Damien S., Monique Rogers and her mom Betty, Myrka Alverist's family, Maggie Alverist, Ann Farrell, Normagene Richardson, Aiden Chase, Rita Stevenson, Mike, Barbara Greco, Dr. Willis Allen, Eleanor Knauf, Alessandra, Cheryl, Nick Caldwell Sr., Lucille Capece, Lexie Sachlis, George F., David Spall, Joan Coletti, Adam Rubino, Berna, Braemen Weiner, Chandler Weiner, Debbie Seckel, Elizabeth Kraus, Kenneth Smith, Mary Taylor, Cynthia, Richard H., Laurie Engelhardt, Diane Adler at the death of her mom Helene Harker, Katie's Paff grandma.

Flowers this week sponsors: The Lauterberg family in celebration of Christmas.



COMMITMENT CARDS for our Estimate of Giving can be placed in our offering plate (use envelope for confidentiality); bring to office; by mail; or by email sslcpompano@gmail.com

OFFERING ENVELOPES, 2018 offering envelopes are available for pick up on the back table. If any other friends of the church who would like offering envelopes, please see Larry Jones or Carol Jacobson.

ATTENDANCE CARDS, are in our bulletin today for members and visitors. Please place in offering plate. Thank You.

REGISTRATION FEE DEADLINE, today is the deadline for the \$10 registration fee to guarantee your seat on the bus for Bishop's Installation on January 20. Please turn it in. Thank You.

10:15 AM	December 24	December 31
ASSISTING MINISTER	Aura Suarez	Aura Suarez
ACOLYTE	Aiyana Cartwright	Katie Paff
LECTOR	Tom Peterson	Rosie Fennelli
USHERS –Need 4 to Serve	Lisa Castaneda Linda Hanzlik Lynda Smith Zachary Smith	Floyd MacDonald Jeanne Pettit Harry Ambrose Patricia Engle
Head Usher	Rosie Fennelli	Rosie Fennelli
GREETERS – Need 2 to Serve	ТВА	Caroline Smith Ruth Wagle
SOUND	Sera Butz	Eric Castaneda
PROJECTION	TBA	Dennis Magarrell

Service Assistants for December

	<u>December 24</u> <u>Christmas Eve</u> <u>5:30p.m Service</u>	<u>December 24</u> <u>Christmas Eve</u> <u>7pm Service</u>	
ASSISTING MINISTER	Sera Butz	Aura Suarez	
ACOLYTE	Katie Paff	Aiyana Cartwright	
USHERS	Lynda Smith Pat Belanger	Terry Shumway	Rosie Fennelli
SOUND	Dennis Magarrell	Sera Butz	





YOU ARE INVITED Next Sunday, January 31st 10:15 Worship Service 11:30 Farewell and Godspeed Reception

Next Sunday we will have a finger food reception following the 10:15am morning worship service. We will have a farewell to our "Pastor Pedro" who is now our new bishop of the Florida Bahamas Synod. We wish Godspeed to Bishop Pedro.

We will also be wishing Godspeed up on Aura Suarez who is our ELCA Deacon. She will be joining Bishop Pedro in Tampa.







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

Sunday Schedule

10:15 a.m. Worship Holy Communion is celebrated weekly

Church Staff

Rev. Dr. Sidney Nelson – Interim Pastor ststephenpastornelson@gmail.com 561-235-0929 Cesar Vidaud – Director of Music Clarence (Teddy) Rowe – Sexton Aidee Koach – Administrative Assistant sslcpompano@gmail.com

Congregation Council

Larry Jones - President councilpresident@ststephenlutheran.net

Christian Hecker – Vice-president Natalie Prego - Secretary Patricia Engle Dennis Magarrell Eric Castaneda - Treasurer Lynda Smith Harry Ambrose

Office hours: 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 Mon- Fri

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