



# **St. Stephen Lutheran Church**

**One of 11,000 Stephen Ministry Congregations Around the World**

***First Sunday of Christmas***

***December 29, 2024***

***Lessons and Carols***

## For Your Prayer – December 30 – January 5, 2024

### Lectionary readings for this week:

**Monday:** 2 Chronicles 1:7-13 Mark 13:32-37 Psalm 147:12-20

**Tuesday:** 1 Kings 3:5-14 John 8:12-19 Psalm 147:12-20

**Wednesday:** Numbers 6:22-27 Galatians 4:4-7 Psalm 147:12-20

**Thursday:** Proverbs 147:12-20 James 3:13-18 Psalm 147:12-20

**Friday:** Job 42:10-17 Luke 8:16-21 Psalm 72

**Saturday:** Isaiah 6:1-5 Acts 7:44-53 Psalm 72

**Next Sunday's Readings(Epiphany) :** Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 (11)  
Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12

**Join your prayers for healing** with God's desires for **Ed Brown, Kristin Carter, Bob & Ginny Cummings, Jack Harris, Sharon Jacobs, Donna Kittelson, Jim Mayfield, Carole Meyer, Helen Nelsen, Paul Reier and George Vonderheide.**

**Pray for those unable to come to worship:** **Martin Bleck, Ed Brown, Birdie Burton, York Doerr, Bob and Angie Groom, Pat Janot, Marilyn Johnson, Jeanne Nelson, Darlene Simon, and Kay Wasaff.**

**Pray for these loved ones of our congregation:** Susan, Charles Baugh, Donald and Carol Baum, , Eleftheria Beck, Tom Beck, Sally Blackburn, June Brantley, Linda Bonfiglio, Mary Bloom, Amy Carl, Karin Cavanaugh, Chris Clarke, Amaree Cluff, Ruth Ann Coski, Judy Craun, Ginny Cummings, Judy Drezek, Becky Drury, Darrin and Rosemary Dunn, Tanya Fritz, David Gade, Joel Gillespie, Greg Gildner, Joan and John Goodhart, Charee Hampton, Sue Hassan and family, Andy Havola, Nick Havola, Bradley Kim Joan and Laurie Heintzleman, Lisa Hill, Jaxon Ireland, Claudia Jacobik, Brian Johnson, Don Johnson, Connie Kendrick, The Kennedy family, Jenn Kramer, Chantal Lacroix, Marnah Lund, Trish and Sara and Matthew Macerelli, Keara Mahony, Laura Margolin, Jack Mayfield, Doug MacKenzie, The Keith Meins family, Liz Montalvo, Ed Moninger, Kim Morris, Bob Myers, Coral Pumley, Kurt Recktenwald, Kurtis Schultz, Lou Schuster, Inge Seiter, Pamela Sharp, Chad Strausbaugh, Al Stern, Monika Stern, Charley Underdahl, Brenda Webster, Caleb Winig, and Elaine Wrich.

# St. Stephen Lutheran Church

## December 29, 2024 ~ *Lessons and Carols*

**Centering Prelude**     *Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming*     Setting, Thomas Keesecker

### **Opening Dialogue**

Come! Look upon the baby Jesus,  
cradled in the arms of his mother.

**Seeing this wondrous sight,  
may our hearts be comforted  
and our spirits filled with peace.**

Come! Listen to choirs of angels  
announcing good news to all people.

**Hearing this marvelous song, may we too sing:  
Glory to God in the highest!**

Come! Receive this ancient story in your heart,  
not as history but as a gift.

**Opening our hearts to this great mystery,  
may Christ be born in us today.**

**Gathering Song**     *Once in royal David's city*     ELW 269

### **Greeting**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

Shine into our hearts the light of your wisdom, O God, and open our minds to the knowledge of your word, that in all things we may think and act according to your good will and may live continually in the light of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**First Reading**     *Luke 2:1-7*

### **Luther's reflections on the birth of Jesus**

Behold Christ lying in the lap of his young mother. . . . What can be sweeter than the Babe, what more lovely than the mother! . . . Look at the Child, knowing nothing. Yet all that is belongs to him, that your conscience should not fear but take comfort in him. Doubt nothing. Watch him springing in the lap of the maiden. Laugh with him. Look upon this Lord of Peace and your spirit will be at peace. . . . You will see how great is the

divine goodness, which seeks above all else that you should not despair. Trust him! Trust him! Here is the Child in whom is salvation. To me there is no greater consolation given to mankind than this, that Christ became man, a child, a babe, playing in the lap and at the breasts of his most gracious mother. Who is there whom this sight would not comfort? Now is overcome the power of sin, death, hell, conscience, and guilt, if you come to judge this gurgling Babe and believe that he is come, not to judge you, but to save.

**Hymn**

*Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

ELW 276

**Second Reading**

*Luke 2:8-16*

### **Luther's reflections on the shepherds and angels**

Look at the shepherds. They were watching their flocks by night, and an angel came and made them apostles, prophets, and children of God. . . . This is a great miracle that the shepherds should have believed this message. They might easily have thought to themselves, "Are we two shepherds worthy that the whole host of heaven should be marshaled for us and all the kings on the earth and the dwellers in Jerusalem be passed by?" I know I would have appealed to common sense and I would have said: "Who am I compared to God and angels and kings? It is an apparition." But the Holy Spirit, who preached through the angels, caused the shepherds to believe. They were so strong in the faith that they were worthy to be spoken to by angels and to hear every angel in heaven singing a cantata just for them. This is a pure wonder that enters not into the heart of man. Our God begins with angels and ends with shepherds. Why does he do such preposterous things? He puts a Babe in a crib. Our common sense revolts and says, "Could not God have saved the world some other way?"

**Hymn**

*While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*

ACS 913

**Third Reading**

*Matthew 2:1-12*

### **Luther's reflections on Herod and the wise men**

When the Wise Men received the divine revelation that the king of the Jews was born, they made straight for Jerusalem, for, of course, they expected to find him at the capital in a lordly castle and a golden chamber. Where else would common sense expect to find a king? But because they were so sure of themselves, the star left them. Then they were sorely tried, and had they relied solely on human wisdom, would surely have said: "Confound it! We have come all this way for nothing. The star has deceived us. The devil has led us by an apparition. If a king had been born, would he not be in the capital and in a palace? But when we come, the star disappears and we find no one who knows anything about him. Can it be that we foreigners should be the first to have news of him

in the royal city? Everyone is so cold and unfriendly that no one offers to go with us and show us the child. They do not believe themselves that to them a king is born, and shall we come and find him? How desolate for the birth of a king! If a puppy were born there would be some little stir, and here a king is supposed to be born and everything is so still. . . . Should not the people be singing, capering, lighting lamps and torches, bedecking the streets with roses and mayflowers? What a miserable king we are seeking! What fools we have been to let ourselves start on this quest!” Nature wants to feel and be certain before believing, but grace will believe before she feels. Faith steps gaily into the darkness, trusting simply in the Word. But having come, they decided to inquire of the king before returning. At their report, Herod the king “was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.” Why was Herod terrified and all Jerusalem with him? He had good reason to be afraid because he had tyrannized over the Jews for thirty years. . . . Now Herod had a crafty plan. “The Jews,” thought he, “will hide the truth from me, but I will find out the town where this king is to be born and also the time, and then if they hide him, I will catch him anyway. I will kill so many babies that he cannot escape.” So he called the scribes to him and said, “Where is Christ to be born?” Then perhaps through fear, the scribes answered him that in the Prophet Micah it is written that He should be born in Bethlehem.

**Hymn**

*The First Noel*

ELW 300

**Fourth Reading**

*John 1:1-5, 14-18*

**Luther’s reflections on the Word made flesh**

Let us, then, meditate upon the Nativity just as we see it happening in our own babies. I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, the majesty of Christ, but rather his flesh. Look upon the baby Jesus. Divinity may terrify man. Inexpressible majesty will crush him. That is why Christ took on our humanity, save for sin, that he should not terrify us but rather that with love and favor he should console and confirm.

This is the word of the prophet: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” (Isaiah 9:6). This is for us the hardest point, not so much to believe that He is the son of the Virgin and God himself, as to believe that this Son of God is ours. That is where we wilt. . . . Truly it is marvelous in our eyes that God should place a little child in the lap of a virgin and that all our blessedness should lie in him. And this Child belongs to all mankind. God feeds the whole world through a Babe nursing at Mary’s breast. This must be our daily exercise: to be transformed into Christ, being nourished by this food. Then will the heart be suffused with all joy and will be strong and confident against every assault.

**Hymn**

*Let Our Gladness Have No End*

ELW 291

**Nicene Creed**

Page 104

*(yellow card in the back of the hymnal)*

## **Prayers**

*Each petition concludes, "God of grace." Response: "Receive our prayer."*

## **Offering of Music**

*Carols Around (And a Round)*

arr. Carl Nygard

## **Offertory Prayer**

### **The Great Thanksgiving**

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, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**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**

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

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:

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

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. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

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. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

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

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

### **Holy Communion**

*When receiving Communion, either stand or kneel at the Rail. Pastor will distribute the bread and a Communion Assistant will come with a tray of pre-filled cups of wine and grape juice. The juice will be in the middle of the tray. Gluten-free wafers are available as an alternative to bread. St. Stephen is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, so all are welcome to receive Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper.*

**Communion Hymn**     *In a far-off place, Jesus comes*     ACS 908

*Love has come*     ELW 292

### **Table Blessing**

### **Prayer after Communion**

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

**Dismissal**

Glory to God in the highest!

**And peace to God’s people on earth!**

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Sending Hymn**

*Cold December Flies Away*

Hymn 299

**Postlude**

*O Come, All ye Faithful*

Setting, Janet Vogt



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*It Came upon a midnight clear List*

*O Come, All ye Faithful Contributors: Janet Vogt*

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## As We Gather

**Parents! Thanks for bringing your children** to worship.

- Did you know that intergenerational worship is the single most important activity encouraging children's faith formation? (See vibrantfaith.com)
- When parents and children need to take a break for a few minutes, there is a play area with toys and books in the room right beneath the Worship Space.
- Age-appropriate activity bags are available in the Gathering Space – ask an usher for assistance.

**Assistance is Available for You:**

- **An induction loop** is provided for the benefit of hearing aid users. To use, please switch your hearing aid to "T."
- **Large print** worship materials are available - ask an usher.
- **Rest rooms** are accessible through the door in the wing to the left of the altar.
- **If someone should need emergency medical assistance**, CPR supplies, and a first aid kit are located in the hallway next to the Fellowship Hall.

**Health Update:** We always encourage you to monitor yourself for symptoms of illness and to worship from home if you are experiencing any. We have masks and hand sanitizer available for use in our building should you require.

## What's Happening Today

**Flowers this morning** are given to the Glory of God by **James and Kathryn Ogborn** in memory of their granddaughter Skyla Jordon Mahony and their parents.

**The Church Office will be closed** through January 1st. If you have emergency need for pastoral care, please call **Pastor Nelson**.

## Information & Upcoming

**St. Stephen Preschool Registration** for the 2025-2026 year is now open to members of St. Stephen, who receive a *10 percent discount on tuition!* Please contact Preschool Administrator **Jessica Kimball** in the Preschool Office for more information.

**Have Fun and Support our St. Stephen Preschool** during our annual Winter Carnival **Sunday, January 12, 2:00 – 4:00 PM**. Would you like to bake a festive cake or cookies! See the insert and mark the white sheet if you're able to help!

**VA Synod Assembly Voting Members Needed.** The 2025 VA Synod Assembly will be **June 13-15th**. At our January meeting St. Stephen will elect two voting members to attend Synod Assembly and two alternates (we will be electing one who identifies as male, and one who identifies as female) on behalf of St. Stephen. **If you would like to be on the ballot at the January meeting for this position, please mark the White Sheet.**

**Our annual congregation meeting** will be held on **Sunday, January 26, 2025** following the 11:00 AM worship service.

**St. Stephen Calendar – December 29, 2024- January 5, 2025**

*Our worship service is available on our website [www.saintstephenlutheran.net](http://www.saintstephenlutheran.net), click on “Worship with Us” and “Services.”*

**SUNDAY, December 29** ~ *First Sunday of Christmas/Lessons & Carols*

9:00 AM Coffee and Conversation (Gathering Space)

**9:45 AM** Worship of Lessons and Carols w/Holy Communion (*livestreamed*)

**MONDAY, December 30**

Office closed

**TUESDAY, December 31**

Office closed

**WEDNESDAY, January 1**

Office closed

**THURSDAY, January 2**

11:00 AM Staff Bulletin Review (Library/Conference Room)

**FRIDAY, January 3**

**SATURDAY, January 4**

5:30 PM AA Meeting (Fellowship Hall)

5:30 PM AlAnon (Gathering Space)

**SUNDAY, January 5** ~ *Epiphany Sunday*

**8:30 AM** Worship – Holy Communion (*livestreamed on our YouTube channel*)

9:30 AM Matins Choir Rehearsal (Worship Space)

9:50 AM AoB/HS/Adult Ed.: Catechism Course (Fellowship Hall)

10:00 AM Faith Formation: Lesson (Undercroft/Preschool Room)

10:30 AM Chancel Choir Warm-up (Worship Space)

**11:00 AM** Worship – Holy Communion

## **Leading our Worship and Hospitality Today**

Acolyte/Crucifer.....	David Nelson
Altar Guild .....	
Audio-Visual Team.....	Nancy Carter and Tim Judy
Bread Baker.....	Paul Kristiansen
Communion Assistants .....	Harvey Nelson and David Nelson
Flower Delivery .....	Diane McCurry
Greeters/Hosts.....	
Lectors.....	
Preacher.....	Pastor Jon Nelson
Tellers.....	Carol Brown, Beth Grant, Stan York
Ushers.....	Bill Dichtel and John McCurry

## ***St. Stephen Lutheran Church***

*612 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185*

*www.saintstephenlutheran.net*

*(757) 229-6688*

**Love God, Love People, Form Faith.**

*(St. Stephen Lutheran Church Vision Statement)*

**All of Us, Called Through Our Baptisms**

**Pastor Jon Nelson** (320-295-8861)

**Karen Ives** – Director of Music (757-229-6688)

**Hollie Jones** – Parish Administrator (229-6688)

**Jessica Kimball** – Preschool Director (229-6688)

**Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center** (873-2273; counselors are in Williamsburg on Thursdays)

Doing Ministry in the World

Pastorjn@saintstephenlutheran.net

MusicDir@saintstephenlutheran.net

Office@saintstephenlutheran.net

Preschool@saintstephenlutheran.net

# *Welcome to St. Stephen Lutheran Church!*

*Please fill this out and drop it in the offering plate  
or give it to an usher.*

*December 29, 2024*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **For guests and members with changes:**

Address (Home) \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

## **Guests Only:**

I belong to \_\_\_\_\_

Church Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please check as many as pertain:

Member

First time guest

Regular guest

Guest (out of town)

Student at William & Mary

Looking for a church home

Desire to speak with pastor

Would like more information about Stephen Ministry

Would like a Parish Nurse to contact me

Any comments? Please be sure your name is above, so we may respond, if necessary.

# Prayer Requests

Please **add** to the prayer list in this month's bulletin and next month's *Quill*:

(please note all names will be removed at the end of the following month, if you wish for someone to be added back on to the prayer list please resubmit their names here)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please **remove** from prayer concerns:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I need a name tag

\_\_\_\_\_ I will bake/bring a festive cake for the Winter carnival

\_\_\_\_\_ I will bake/bring cookies for the Winter carnival

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to be the Female voting member for the VA Synod Assembly

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to be the alternate Female for the VA Synod Assembly

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to be the Male voting member for the VA Synod Assembly

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to be the alternate for the Male for the VA Synod Assembly