



St. Stephen Lutheran Church

One of 11,000 Stephen Ministry Congregations Around the World

We believe that community is *beautiful* and *messy* and *fulfilling* and *conflicted* and...the POINT. God calls us together into community for the sake of one another, our neighbors, and creation. We don't always get it right, but we trust that when we center the love and grace that Jesus taught, we will get it right more often than not. ***You are welcome here!***

We don't expect perfect, put-together people; we don't want you to conform to us and our ways; we want you to show up as who you are and to experience the love and grace of God as we have experienced it. And we hope that once you do, you will join us in sharing it with others too.

Christmas Eve
December 24, 2024 ~ 7:30 PM

As We Gather

While a student at William & Mary, Thomas Jefferson sketched a seating plan for an octagonal worship space, with a central altar, for a college chapel. The design of St. Stephen's worship space is based on his sketch.

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.
- A gender-neutral, **Family restroom and a Women's restroom** can be found in the hallway behind our Worship Space.
- **Additional Men's and Women's restrooms** can be found on the lower level of the church building.
- **If someone should need emergency medical assistance** an AED (Automated External Defibrillator), 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.

If you have sponsored poinsettias, feel free to take them home following the service tonight. Poinsettias that are left will remain in the Worship Space through the First Sunday of Christmas.

The Church Office will be closed after Christmas, reopening January 2. If you have emergency need for pastoral care between Christmas and January 2, please call **Pastor Nelson**.

Dec 29th One Worship Service at 9:45AM - Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion for the First Sunday After Christmas.

Hymn of Praise

Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.

Angels We Have Heard on High (stanza 1)

Refrain (Ring your bells during the refrain!)

Gloria in excelsis Deo;
gloria in excelsis Deo.

Prayer of the Day

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

First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep
darkness--

on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing
plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of
Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping
warriors

and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his
kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and
forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do
this.

Reader: "The Word of the Lord." Response: "Thanks be to God."

The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.

¹¹The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Reader: "The Word of the Lord." Response: "Thanks be to God."

Gospel Acclamation*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (stanzas 1&2)*

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

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

Gospel**Luke 2:1-20**

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

Response after announcement of the Gospel: "Glory to you, O Lord."

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for

see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Response at the conclusion of the Gospel: "Praise to you, O Christ."

Gospel Response

Go Tell it on the Mountain

arr. Karol Kimmell

Sermon

"But what if there's reason to fear?"

Pastor Jon Nelson

The Hymn of the Day will be announced in a few moments. First, take time during the silence: What are your prayers in response to the sermon?

Hymn of the Day

On Christmas Night (stanzas 1 & 4)

- 1 On Christmas night all Christians sing
to hear the news the angels bring.
On Christmas night all Christians sing
to hear the news the angels bring:
news of great joy, news of great mirth,
news of our merciful king's birth.

- 4 All out of darkness we have light,
which made the angels sing this night.
All out of darkness we have light,
which made the angels sing this night:
"Glory to God in highest heav'n;
peace on earth, and goodwill. Amen."

Prayers

Offering & Offering of Music

*The Son of Mary
St. Stephen Choirs*

Andrew Parr

Offertory Hymn

What Child Is This (Stanza 3)

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

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:

Sanctus

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (Stanza 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
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The bread and wine we're about to share joins us to the people throughout history and across the world who have come to this meal in search of life.

Just as Jesus' birth was for the whole world this bread and wine is for everyone: for the hungry, for the lost, for those who search and those who are found, for those who question and those who know peace this is bread and wine for everyone.

Holy God, we praise you. Let the heavens be joyful, and the earth be glad. We bless you for creating the whole world, for your promises to your people, and for the life we know in Jesus Christ your son. Born of Mary, he shares our life. Eating with sinners, he welcomes us. Leading his followers, he guides us. Dying on the cross, he loves us. Risen from the dead, he gives new life.

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.

We pray, God of love, that you will send your Holy Spirit upon us and what we do here: that we and these signs, touched by your Spirit, may be signs of life and love to each other and to all the world. **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 the Lord's Supper.

Communion Music *(bulletin insert)*

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming	ELW 272
O Little Town of Bethlehem	ELW 279

Table Blessing

Prayer after Communion

Lighting of Nativity Candles

As you give and receive light for your hand-held candles, please tilt the unlit candle toward the flame. Please hold your lit candle upright, to prevent wax spills.

Hymn after Communion *Silent Night, Holy Night!*

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

2 Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

3 Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

(Silence for Prayer)

Please extinguish your candle when the Pastor extinguishes his.

Sending Hymn *Joy to the World*

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature
sing.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills,
and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 No more let sin and sorrow grow
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings
flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

4 He rules the world with truth and
grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Blessing

The God of love, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, lavish you with grace, illumine your path, and increase your joy, today and always. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. The Word of God dwells in you richly. **Thanks be to God.**

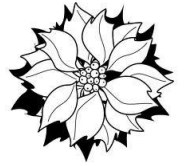
Postlude

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Setting, Christopher Uehlein



Poinsettias are given to the Glory of God by the following:



Helen Allen in loving memory of John E. Allen, her parents Ervin and Mina Kreitzer, and her brothers and sisters

Jane deSolms in memory of her parents, Bettie and Irv deSolms

George and Gerri Bass in memory of their parents

Bill Dichtel and Diana Tiller-Dichtel in honor of the staff of St. Stephen Lutheran Church

Heidi Flatin to the Glory of God

Susan Kauffman in memory of her parents, Carl and Helen Herzog and her aunt and uncle, Marie and Bernie Bjerck

James and Kathryn Ogborn in thanks for all of God's blessings

Tom and Sandy Peterkin in thanks for family

Randy and Chris Punchard in thanks for God's many blessing

Paul and Martha Reier in memory of their parents, John and Jean Reier and Arch and Ruth Ennis

Karen Shoberg in thanks for God's many blessings

Christopher Turner and Sonya Lim in memory of Jim Turner

Jim Weilmuenster in loving memory of Sue Blanks Weilmuenster and Linda Laity Hite

Ann Booth Young in memory of Christopher Doak



Contributions to the Jean Kuhn Memorial Fund



Susan Britcher in memory of her parents, Kathryn and Jacob Britcher

Jim and Terri Larsen in memory of Jean and Al Kuhn

Corey Knestrick in memory of Lynn Knestrick

Jim and Janice Mayfield in thanks for our family

Karen Shoberg in thanks for my loving family

Marilyn Johnson in thanks for the generous members of our congregation

Leading our Worship and Hospitality Tonight

Acolyte/Crucifer..... (7:30) David Nelson
Altar Guild (7:30) Amy Bergh and Carol Wiers
Audio-Visual Team..... (7:30) TBD
Bread Baker..... Amy Bergh
Cantors (7:30)
Communion Assistants (7:30) Carol Wiers and Nancy Egloff
Lectors.....
Preacher..... Pastor Jon Nelson
Tellers..... Tom Peterkin, Sandy Peterkin, Sandy Croushore
Ushers.....(early service) Reed and Karen Nester

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

*612 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185*

*www.saintstephenlutheran.net*

*(757) 229-6688*

**We gather to worship and study God's Word to deepen our faith and live our Christian witness and service in the community.**

*(St. Stephen Lutheran Church Vision Statement)*

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

**Pastor Jon Nelson**

**Karen Ives** – Director of Music

**Hollie Jones** – Parish Administrator

**Jessica Kimball** – Preschool Director

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

Doing Ministry in the World

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MusicDir@saintstephenlutheran.net

Office@saintstephenlutheran.net

Preschool@saintstephenlutheran.net



# Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath  
 2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in  
 3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet - ness fills the  
 4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man

sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as  
 mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the  
 air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the  
 woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who

seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -  
 vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she  
 dark - ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from  
 dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to

mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.  
 bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.  
 sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.  
 the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851–1934, sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth,  
 1845–1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876–1948, st. 4

Music: ES IST EIN ROS, *Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 1599; arr. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621

# O Little Town of Bethlehem

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove  
3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!  
4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.  
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.  
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.

yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.  
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,  
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!  
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.  
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!