

St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church
The Nativity of Our Lord
December 24, 2025
7:30 P. M.



For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given!

We serve God through caring and compassionate service.

**St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
December 24, 2025
7:30 P.M.**

***The Congregation shall stand**

The Prelude

Brass Ensemble

Ringling of the Bells

Isabelle C.

(Ringling of the Bells is used to symbolize waiting and anticipation for the coming of Christ. The ringling of the bells serve as a reminder of the spiritual practice of waiting, reflecting on the themes of hope and the anticipation of the birth of Jesus)

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Jerry and Trudy Land

The Christ candle is lit.

We praise you, O Lord our God, for giving us every spiritual blessing through your beloved Son. Enlighten our hearts and minds that we may shine as lights in this dark world, to the praise of your glorious grace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen

C: To you is born a Savior!

Christmas Greetings

Tom Stempson

I would like to welcome everyone friends, family and visitors to our Christmas Eve celebration! It is a joy to gather together in this holy space as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. As we begin our Christmas service, let us Pause open our hearts and our minds to the wonder and promise of Christ's coming.

Call To Worship

L: Wonder of wonders, God has come to us! Not as a judge, but as our Savior, not in power, but as a servant. God comes to us! Not in

silence, but in the Word made flesh. In the midst of darkness, God brings a new light. In the midst of confusion and fear, God brings hope and peace. In the midst of strife and stress, God comforts and soothes us. Wonder of wonders! God is now with us! Come, let us worship Christ, our Savior! Welcome to Christmas worship.

For those that are able, please rise as we sing our gathering hymn.

***The Gathering Hymn**

"O, Come, All Ye Faithful"

*Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts 1,3-4
tr.unknown, st.2*

ADESTE FIDELES

Music: Music; attr. John Francis Wade

**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:**

***The Invocation**

L: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

C: **The light shines in darkness, and the darkness has not
overcome it.**

L: Those who dwell in the land of deep darkness, on them has
light shined.

C: We have beheld Christ's glory as of the only Son from the Father.

L: For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

C: In him was life, and the life was the light of all.

***The Greeting**

L: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

***The Prayer**

L: O Lord our God, you have commanded the light to shine out of darkness, and you have again brought us to your house of prayer to praise your goodness and ask for your gifts. Accept now in your endless mercy the sacrifice of our worship and thanksgiving and grant us those requests which will be wholesome for us. Make us to be children of the light and of the day and heirs of your everlasting inheritance. Remember, O Lord, according to the multitude of your mercies, your whole church, all who join with us in prayers, all our sisters and brothers wherever they may be in your vast kingdom who stand in need of your help and comfort. Pour out upon them the riches of your mercy, so that we, redeemed in soul and body and steadfast in faith, may ever praise your wonderful and holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The assembly shall be seated.

The Prophecy Isaiah 9:2-7(NRSVue) Patrick Larimer Jr.

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied exultation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴ For 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. ⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶ For 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. ⁷ Great will be his authority, 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.

The Carol "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

Text: Edmund H Sears, 1810-1876
Music: Richard S Willis, 1819-1900

CAROL

- 1. It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold; "Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all-gracious king." The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.**
- 2. Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled, and still their heav'nly music floats o'er all the weary world. Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hov'ring wing, and ever o'er its babel sounds the blessed angels sing.**
- 3. And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low, who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow: look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing; oh, rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!**
- 4. For lo! The days are hast'ning on, by prophets seen of old, when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold, when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling, and all the world give back the song which now the angels sing.**

The Visitation Luke 1:26-38(NRSVue) Shirley Stempson

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel 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 said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ 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. 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 angel departed from her.

The Carol "What Child is This"

Text: William C Dix, 1837-1898
Music: English ballad, 16th cent.

GREENSLEEVES

- 1. What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!**
- 2. Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you; hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!**

**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!**

The Birth

Luke 2:1-7(NRSVue)

Dena Travelsted

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And 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 in the guest room.

The Carol

"Away in a Manger"

Text: North American, 19th cent.

Music: James R Murray, 1841-1905

AWAY IN A MANGER

- 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.**
- 3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay close by me for
ever and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in
your tender care and fit us for heaven, to live with you
there.**

The Announcement Luke 2:8-20(NRSVue) Alex Logan

⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel 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." ¹³ And 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!"

¹⁵ When 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." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

The Carol "Hark the Herald Angels"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

MENDELSSOHN

Music: Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847; arr. William H Cummings, 1831-1915

1. 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!"

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

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!"

The assembly shall be seated.

The Christmas Meditation

Pastor Robert C Rohrman

The Offering

The assembly shall stand.

***The Offertory**

C: What shall I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.

If I were a wise man I would do my part

Yet what I can I give him—give my heart.

***The Offertory Prayer**

L: God of glory,

Great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace through Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

***Holy Communion**

If you profess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and acknowledge His presence within the Sacrament, we invite you to receive Holy Communion on this most holy of nights.

***The Eucharistic Prayer**

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again.

***The Distribution of Holy Communion**

The Carols

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

"The First Noel"

The assembly shall stand.

***The Distribution of Light**

The ushers will come forward and will receive the light from the Altar candle. They will then light the adults candle that are seated next to the aisle. That person will then share the light with those in their pew. Please keep in mind that if you have a lit candle, then it Must Remain upright. Only unlit candles are turned to be lit.

***The Gospel of the Incarnation according to John 1:1-14**
Pastor Robert C Rohrman

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

The Word became Flesh

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. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. **8** He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. **9** The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through 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.

14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

***The Carol**

"Silent Night" (First Verse in German)

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F Young, 1820-1885
Music: Franz Gruber, 1787-1863

STILLE NACHT

**Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht! Alles schlaft, ein sam wacht nur
das traute, hoch heilige Paar. Holder Knabe im lокkigen
Haar, schlaf in himmlischer, Ruh. Schlaf in himmlischer
Ruh.**

**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.**

The Candles are extinguished.

***The Christmas Prayer - Tom Stempson**

L: Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence

L: Gathering God, you bring your people from every corner of the earth together before the manger that you have made a throne. Unite the church in love as we rejoice in the news of your coming. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L: Creating God, you brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Join our voices with the roaring seas, the exulting fields, and the trees of the forest singing for joy on this holy night. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L: Transforming God, the world trembles amid violence and war. Empower our hands, feet, and hearts with your Spirit to shatter the rod of the oppressor and turn swords into plowshares. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L: Shepherding God, you lead us to your love in the face of our neighbor. Send us into the world to find your Word made flesh in one another, especially those who are sick or struggling. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L: Nurturing God, you dwell with us in humble places. Sustain housing and clothing ministries in this community, that all find shelter and warmth. We pray especially for youth seeking safety and care. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L: Abiding God, you remain at the side of all the departed. Grant all who mourn hope in the resurrection and peace of Christ Jesus. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L: With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

***The Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

***The Sending Hymn**

"Joy to the World"

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

ANTIOCH

Mus2.ic: English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

**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 no 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.**

***The Blessing**

L: The triune God,
glorious Mystery,
holy Incarnate One,
abiding Comforter,
+ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

C: Amen.

***The Dismissal**

L: Glory to God in the highest!

C: And peace to God's people on earth!

L: Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

C: Thanks be to God!

The Postlude

Brass Ensemble

St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Plainfield, IN 46168
Phone: (317) 838-9600
www.ststephensplainfield.org

Holly Erickson
Music Director

Gregg Burks
Organist

Guest Musicians:

Brass Ensemble

Trumpets

John Stobaugh

Macy Stewart

Horn

Dave Merkle

Trombone

Angelo Anton

Tuba

Wes Tincher

Readers:

Patrick Larimer Jr.

Shirley Stempson

Dena Travelsted

Alex Logan

The Poinsettias adorning the Chancel are given by:

Jeff and Luann Althouse

Gregg Burks

Susie Johnson

Gloria Kocher

Jerry and Trudy Land

Dave and Beth Mansfield

Tony and Betsy McMichael

Jeff and Linda Mitny

Bob and Sally Rohrman

Jim and Dena Travelsted

Kay Weiser

Doug and Jill Worden

