

St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church
First Sunday of Christmas
December 28, 2025



*Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod.
Matthew 2:14-15*

We serve God through caring and compassionate service.

The Service

**The Congregation shall stand*

The Prelude

***The Brief Order for Confession & Forgiveness**

L: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
C: Amen.

L: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
C: Amen.

L: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

L: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

L: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. Through the Holy Spirit, God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in our hearts through faith.
C: Amen.

***The Gathering Hymn**

"Angels, from the Realms of Glory" ELW 275

Text: James Montgomery, 1771-1854, alt., sts 1-3; Salisbury Hymn Book, 1857, st 4
Music: Henry T Smart, 1813-1879

REGENT SQUARE

**1. Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all
the earth; once you sang creation's story, now proclaim
Messiah's birth:**

**Refrain: Come and worship, come and worship, worship
Christ, the newborn king.**

**2. Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your
flocks by night, God with us is now residing, yonder
shines the infant light.** **Refrain:**

**3. Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam
afar; seek the great desire of nations, you have seen
his natal star.** **Refrain:**

**4. All creation, join in praising God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in
One.** **Refrain:**

***The Greeting**

L: 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.

***The Kyrie**

L: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

L: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to
the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

L: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

L: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

L: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord

C: Amen.

***The Hymn of Praise**

L. Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.

C: Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Prayer of the Day

Violet L

L: Let us pray,

C: O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, 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 shall be seated.

The Children's Meditation

Dena T

The First Reading

Isaiah 63:7-9(NRSVue)

⁷ I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,
the praiseworthy acts of the Lord,
because of all that the Lord has done for us
and the great favor to the house of Israel
that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not act deceitfully," and he became their savior

9 in all their distress.

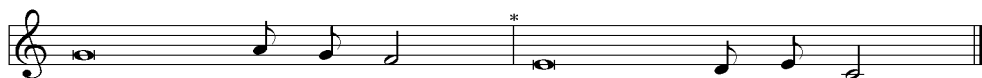
It was no messenger or angel
but his presence that saved them;
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 148

intoned responsively



¹ Hallelujah! Praise the Lord | from the heavens;*
praise God | in the heights.

**² Praise the Lord, | all you angels;*
sing praise, all you | host of heaven.**

³ Praise the Lord, | sun and moon;*
sing praise, all you | shining stars.

**⁴ Praise the Lord, heav- | en of heavens,*
and you waters a- | bove the heavens.**

⁵ Let them praise the name | of the Lord,*
who commanded, and they | were created,
⁶ **who made them stand fast forev- | er and ever,***
giving them a law that shall not | pass away.

⁷ Praise the Lord | from the earth*
you sea monsters | and all deeps;
⁸ **fire and hail, | snow and fog,***
tempestuous wind, do- | ing God's will;

⁹ mountains | and all hills,*
fruit trees | and all cedars;
¹⁰ **wild beasts | and all cattle,***
creeping things and | flying birds;

¹¹ sovereigns of the earth | and all peoples,*
princes and all rulers | of the world;
¹² **young | men and maidens,***
old and | young together.

¹³ Let them praise the name | of the Lord,*
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over | earth
and heaven.

¹⁴ **The Lord has raised up strength for the people and praise**
for all | faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the Lord.
| Hallelujah!

The Second Reading

Hebrews 2:10-18(NRSVue)

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this

reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters,
¹² saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

¹³ And again,
"I will put my trust in him."

And again,
"Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,
¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The Word of the Lord
C: Thanks be to God.

The assembly shall stand.

***The Gospel Acclamation**

C: Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

***The Holy Gospel**

Matthew 2:13-23(NRSVue)

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

The Gospel of the Lord
C: Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly shall be seated.

The Sermon

Tom Stempson

The Hymn of the Day

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

"What Child is This"

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 assembly shall stand.

***The Apostle's Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell,
on the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

***Prayers of Intercession**

Violet L

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.

God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer and protect them in the palm of your hand. We pray especially for Scott's great aunt, Raynaud's family, Shukti's grandson, Pastor Bob, Deb, Jody, Tony, Joyce, Cathy H, Frank, Leroy, Wendy, Tori, Yvonne, John, Donna, Peggy H, Stephanie, Anita, Michelle, Ann, Genie, Wally, Troy, Anne, Cathy, Chyrstal, and Vivian. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Heron's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray, Loving God, for the leaders of the church. Guide the synod staff as they select possible candidates for our call process. Give us patience as we await a pastor. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones. Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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 Peace of the Lord**

L: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

*The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.
The assembly shall be seated.*

The Offering

The assembly shall stand.

***The Offertory**

C: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.

***The Offertory Prayer**

L: Let us pray,

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.**

***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 "Go Tell It On The Mountain"**

Text: African American spiritual, refrain: John W Work Jr, 1872-1925, stanzas, alt
Music: African American spiritual

GO TELL IT

**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:**

*The candles are extinguished.
The assembly shall be seated*

The Announcements

The Assembly shall stand.

***The Benediction and Sending**

L: The triune God,
Glorious Mystery
Holy Incarnate One,
Abiding Comforter
+ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

C: Amen.

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. Serve others with
care and compassion.

C: Thanks be to God.

The Postlude

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December 28, 2025

Welcome to St. Stephen's! We are glad you have joined us for worship. **In case of emergency ministerial care, please contact Tom Stempson, Phone #317-374-8708, email: stempson@att.net.** We have been blessed to worship alongside you and hope to see you again soon!

This morning we welcome Tom Stempson presiding. Thank you for sharing your time and talents with us.

Please have all announcements for the bulletin to Peg Graham by 5:00 pm on Thursday before worship on Sunday. Thank you. Email - peglggra@att.net; cell phone - 317-796-0424.

Prayer Requests...

Pastor Bob – health issues.

Tom & Shirley – Doug, terminal cancer; John; Peggy H, brain tumor.

Holly E – Deb, lung cancer recurred; Anita, bone cancer; Anne, kidney transplant.

Jim & Dena T – daughter Jody, health issues; Leroy, health.

Tony M – relief from pain and healing.

Kay W – stepdaughter Joyce, ICU Methodist Hosp.

Member of Sewing Group – Cathy H, entering hospice.

Genie & Wally R – brother Frank, multiple surgeries; Genie, health; Wally, back.

Shukti S – grandson

Wendy B – gainful employment.

Pastor Bob & Sally –Yvonne, broken ribs & hip.

Jim B – wife Donna, recovering from a liver transplant.

Raynaud C – family in Haiti.

Dave & Beth – Troy, broken back.

Lois B – son John, Ohio, recovery from hip surgery.

Scott C – great aunt, broken hip.

Patti W – sister Deb diagnosed with PSP.

Tori A – recovery surgery; Stephanie, heart surgery; Michelle, infection.

Phyllis H – daughter Cathy, granddaughter Chrystal.

Izzy L – friend, Vivian, health.

Jesus said, “Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.” Matthew 19:14 - There are children activity bags in a basket in the Narthex for children, of various ages, to use during church. The children's bulletin follows the Lectionary for each week and the children can take it home. At the end of the service, please return the bags to the basket.

Volunteers are always needed to make our services a fellowship of community. Please take time to check the sign-up sheet posted on the black bulletin board for opportunities to serve. **Volunteers are needed to help with Fellowship.** If you can supply the food and snacks on a Sunday, please sign up on the list in the Fellowship Hall. Monetary donations are welcome, too. If you have questions, please see Gloria Kocher.

Current giving income received in the month of November was \$6,870.60. Amount needed each month per 2026 budget is \$9,583.00. If you'd like to make your offering online so you don't have to deal with checks and envelopes, go to ststephensplainfield.org and click on the Online Offering tab. Thank you.



Please fill out the yellow cards and place them in the offering plate. The cards allow us to track attendance and follow up with visitors. For members, your name and date, along with any prayer requests will suffice. For visitors, please provide your contact information so we can send you a follow-up email or text.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY: This month our pantry is **Saturday, January 24**. Pantry set-up will be **Friday, January 23**. We know it's a lot to ask, but please consider giving some time to this important mission. Remember us when you shop or during your regular giving. We've been so successful with this mission only because of your loyalty. God Bless.

Preparing for Next Week: **Monday** *Luke 19:41-44* **Tuesday** *Isaiah 16:1-9* **Wednesday** *John 8:12-19* **Name of Jesus** **Thursday** *Luke 2:21-22* **Friday** *Hebrews 11:1-12* **Saturday** *Psalm 72* **Second Sunday of Christmas:** *Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1[1-9]10-18*