

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

Member congregation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (clclutheran.org)

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School Website: ssls.org

December 22, 2024 † Advent 4



We Welcome Our Visitors who are with us this morning.

We hope that you are uplifted by the Gospel at our worship service.

We invite you to join us every Sunday.

† Preparation for Worship: Read Psalm 22 (Lutheran Service Book or Pew Bible) †

**Our Worship Services will be Posted to Our Website Each Sunday Evening.
To Watch our Worship Service Online Please Click This Link:**

<https://www.sslcwest.org/worship.html>

Opening Hymn: 358 From Heaven Above to Earth I Come LSB 358



1 "From heav'n a - bove to earth I come To bear good
2 "To you this night is born a child Of Mar - y,
3 "This is the Christ, our God Most High, Who hears your
4 "He will on you the gifts be - stow Pre - pared by



news to ev - 'ry home; Glad tid - ings of great
cho - sen vir - gin mild; This lit - tle child of
sad and bit - ter cry; He will Him - self your
God for all be - low, That in His king - dom,



joy I bring, Where - of I now will say and sing:
low - ly birth Shall be the joy of all the earth.
Sav - ior be From all your sins to set you free.
bright and fair, You may with us His glo - ry share.

5 "These are the signs that you shall mark:
The swaddling clothes and manger dark.
There you will find the infant laid
By whom the heav'n's and earth were made."

6 How glad we'll be to find it so!
Then with the shepherds let us go
To see what God for us has done
In sending us His own dear Son.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.
Tune: Geistliche lieder, Leipzig, 1539, ed. Valten Schumann
Text and tune: Public domain

Invocation

We invoke ("call upon") the name of the one true God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

P In the name of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

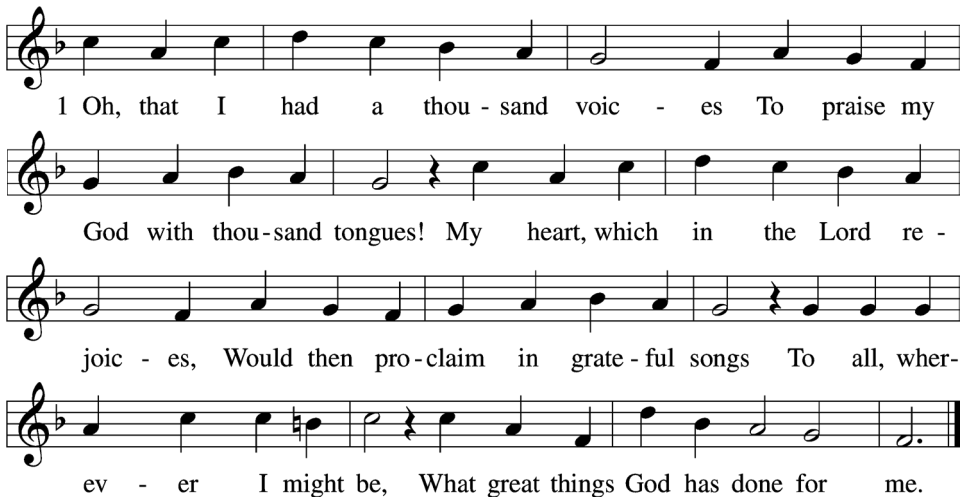
G Amen.

Confession and Absolution

We come before our Holy God recognizing that we are sinful and daily need His forgiveness.

- P** God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
- C** **If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**
- P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- C** **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** (1 John 1:5, 7-9)
- P** Let us pray...
- C** **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer:
We confess that we are sinful by nature, and have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. We have not loved You above all things. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. Have mercy on us, and, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us our sins.**
- P** Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. We are forgiven! With boldness and confidence we may approach the throne to find grace to help in time of need. In the joy and peace of forgiveness let us praise the Lord...

“Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices” LSB 811



1 Oh, that I had a thou - sand voic - es To praise my
God with thou-sand tongues! My heart, which in the Lord re -
joic - es, Would then pro - claim in grate - ful songs To all, wher -
ev - er I might be, What great things God has done for me.

Text: Johann Mentzer, 1658–1734; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, alt. Tune: Johann Balthasar König, 1691–1758
Text: © 1941 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 130003862 Tune: Public domain

Prayer of the Day

P We pray:

Lord God, heavenly Father, who sent Your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to become man and to come into the world that He might destroy the works of the devil, deliver us poor offenders of Your holy Law from sin and death, and give us everlasting life: We ask You to so rule and govern our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, that we may seek no other refuge than His Word, and thus avoid all offense to which, by nature, we are inclined, in order that we may always be found among the faithful followers of Your Son, Jesus Christ, and by faith in Him obtain eternal salvation, through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord and Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.

C Amen.

First Reading

Hebrews 10:5-10 (NKJV)

⁵ Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. ⁶ In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come -- In the volume of the book it is written of Me -- To do Your will, O God.' " ⁸ Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), ⁹ then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. ¹⁰ By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Second Reading

Luke 1:39-55 (NKJV)

P The second reading is from Luke 1:39-55

C Sanctify us by Your truth, O LORD. Your Word is truth!

³⁹ Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

⁴³ "But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" ⁴⁴
"For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped
in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ "Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of
those things which were told her from the Lord." ⁴⁶ And Mary said: "My soul magnifies
the Lord, ⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. ⁴⁸ For He has regarded the
lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me
blessed. ⁴⁹ For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name. ⁵⁰
And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has
shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their
hearts. ⁵² He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly. ⁵³ He
has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty. ⁵⁴ He has
helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy, ⁵⁵ As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever."

P Here ends our Scripture readings.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

Apostles' Creed *We boldly confess what we believe.*

W.S. p. 15

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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.

The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn of the Day: 384 Of the Father's Love Begotten

LSB 384



1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten Ere the worlds be -
2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, When the vir - gin,
3 This is He whom seers in old time Chant - ed of with
4 O ye heights of heav'n, a - dore Him; An - gel hosts, His
△ 5 Christ, to Thee, with God the Fa - ther, And, O Ho - ly



gan to be, He is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
full of grace, By the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,
one ac - cord, Whom the voic - es of the proph - ets
prais - es sing. Pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore Him
Ghost, to Thee Hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing



He the source, the end - ing He, Of the things that are, that
Bore the Sav - ior of our race, And the babe, the world's Re -
Prom - ised in their faith - ful word. Now He shines, the long - ex -
And ex - tol our God and King. Let no tongue on earth be
And un - end - ing prais - es be, Hon - or, glo - ry, and do -



have been, And that fu - ture years shall see
deem - er, First re - vealed His sa - cred face
pect - ed; Let cre - a - tion praise its Lord
si - lent, Ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring
min - ion, And e - ter - nal vic - to - ry



Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
Ev - er - more and ev - er - more. A - men.

Text: Aurelius Prudentius Clemens, 348–c. 413; (sts. 1–4): tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–66, alt.; (st. 5): tr. Henry W. Baker, 1821–77

Tune: Plainsong, 13th cent., mode V

Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon Text: Micah 5:2-4

(NKJV)

² " But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting." ³ Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel. ⁴ And He shall stand and feed His flock In the strength of the LORD, In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God; And they shall abide, For now He shall be great To the ends of the earth;

Sermon Theme: Bethlehem of Judea, a Little Town to Sing About.

- 1. This is the birthplace of the eternal Lord and Savior.**
- 2. This is the "house of bread" from which came the Bread of Life.**
- 3. This is the "fruitful" town from which came One who has made possible a bountiful harvest of souls.**

Offertory

LSB 956

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new
a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way
from Thy pres - ence; and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va - tion;
and up - hold me with Thy free spir - it. A - men.

Offering *We offer our gifts to the Lord, remembering that He has first given to us that we might have to give to Him.*

Sermon Hymn: 361 O Little Town of Bethlehem

LSB 361



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.
O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–93

Tune: Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

Text and tune: Public domain

Prayer of the Church *We bring our prayers to God.*

Lord's Prayer

LSB 209

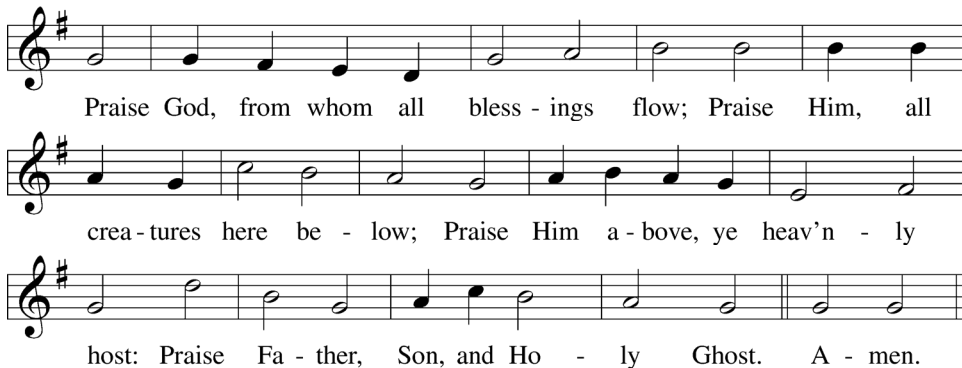
- C** Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction *The blessing given by God for the blessing of His people (Numbers 6:24-26).*

- P** The LORD bless you and keep you.
The LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

The Doxology

LSB 805



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; Praise Him, all
crea - tures here be - low; Praise Him a - bove, ye heav'n - ly
host: Praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

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Closing Hymn: 353 Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring

LSB 353



1 Je - sus came, the heav'ns a - dor - ing, Came with peace from
2 Je - sus comes a - gain in mer - cy When our hearts are
3 Je - sus comes to hearts re - joic - ing, Bring - ing news of
4 Je - sus comes in joy and sor - row, Shares a - like our



realms on high; Je - sus came to win re - demp - tion,
 worn with care; Je - sus comes a - gain in an - swer
 sins for - giv'n; Je - sus comes with words of glad - ness,
 hopes and fears; Je - sus comes, what - e'er be - falls us,



Low - ly came on earth to die; Al - le - lu - ia!
 To an ear - nest, heart - felt prayer; Al - le - lu - ia!
 Lead - ing souls re - deemed to heav'n. Al - le - lu - ia!
 Cheers our hearts and dries our tears; Al - le - lu - ia!



Al - le - lu - ia! Came in deep hu - mil - i - ty.
 Al - le - lu - ia! Comes to save us from de - spair.
 Al - le - lu - ia! Hope to all the world is giv'n.
 Al - le - lu - ia! Com - forts us in fail - ing years.

Text: Godfrey Thring, 1823–1903, alt.

Tune: Geistreiches Gesang-Buch, 1698, Darmstadt

Text and tune: Public domain

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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|-----------|---|
| Today: | 10:00 a.m. Worship Service |
| 12/22/24 | 11:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal |
| | 11:15 a.m. Christmas Eve Children's Practice |
| Tuesday | 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Children's Service |
| 12/24/24 | |
| Wednesday | 10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Worship Service |
| 12/25/24 | |
| Sunday | 10:00 a.m. Worship Service |
| 12/29/24 | |
| Wednesday | 10:00 a.m. New Year's Day Worship Service |
| 1/1/25 | |