

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

West & East Bay, Central Valley, and Southern California

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

320 Moorpark Way - Mountain View, California 94041-1600



Pastor: Luke Bernthal

Email: lbernthal@live.com ☩ Cell: (402) 389-2147

Home: (650) 282-5752

Online Video Production: Chris Holt, Julia Bernthal, Scott Mueller

Organist: Barb Gullerud



Websites: ststephenclc.org (East Bay) - sslwest.org (West)

Church Office: (650) 964-5915

St. Stephen Lutheran School Staff: Isaac & Mikkela Schmitt (Teachers),
Julia Bernthal (Administrator), Pastor Luke Bernthal (Principal)

School Office: (650) 961-2071

School Website: ssls.org

December 24, 2023 ☩ Christmas Eve



Welcome to our 2023 Christmas Eve Service!

Thanks to all the volunteers, musicians, and parents who made this worship service possible by helping the children learn their pieces and songs. A special thanks goes out to the children who put in their time and effort to make this day a truly special occasion.

But an even more special thanks to our Savior Jesus Christ, who is the reason we celebrate CHRISTmas!

Welcome & Opening Prayer

(Pastor Luke)

P Welcome to our Christmas Eve worship service as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We begin with a prayer to our God and Savior.

Opening Hymn: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" LSB 379 v. 1-3



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
2 High - est, most ho - ly, Light of Light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
Born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal He comes;
Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!

Come and be - hold Him Born the king of an - gels:
Son of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
Glo - ry to God In the high - est:

Refrain
O come, let us a - dore Him, O come, let us a - dore Him,
O come, let us a - dore Him, Christ the Lord!

Text: tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–80, alt. Text and tune: John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786 Text and tune: Public domain

Invocation

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

- P** We begin this Christmas Eve service 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** Jesus is the Light of the World, and in Him is no darkness at all.

G **If we walk in the light as He is in the light,
we have fellowship with one another,
and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin.**

- P** On this Christmas Eve we celebrate the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World.

G **Dear Jesus, we celebrate Your coming at Your birth in Bethlehem.
We thank You for coming into our hearts by Your gift of faith,
and we look forward to Your coming on the Last Day when You will take us,
and all believers, to be with You forever in heaven.**

- P** As we meditate on Your manger, Your cross, Your empty tomb, and Your Word, we come before Your throne today confessing our sins and asking for Your forgiveness.

G **Lord of heaven and earth, forgive us all our sins.
As we see the world in darkness and in need of Your light,
increase our faith, love, courage, and strength.
Give us Your power to be lights in this world, reflecting Your love. Amen.**

- P** Our Father in Heaven has been good and merciful to us.
In His love He has given us, His children, the greatest Gift: He sent His Son Jesus, the Christ Child, whose birth in Bethlehem so long ago we celebrate.
Jesus came as a lowly servant to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. By His shed blood on the cross we are forgiven! In peace and joy let us sing of our salvation!

“Yea, Lord, We Greet Thee” LSB 379 v. 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!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!***

Text: tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–80, alt. Text and tune: John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786
Text and tune: Public domain

CONFESSION OF FAITH

“The Christmas Creed”

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, Who sent His Son as my Savior on Christmas Day.

**I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Announced by the Angels,
Worshiped by the shepherds,
Adored by the Wise Men,
Who lived to suffer, die, and rise again,
To free me from sin, death, and the power of the devil.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
Who has brought me to faith in the Christ of Christmas,
And by whose continuous work in my heart,
I am ever led to show Christ my love and live under Him as my King,
Both now and forevermore. Amen.**

One Small Babe

Pastor: “One Small Babe.” How is it that we are gathered here today because of One small baby in a manger? How is it that the true joy and true meaning of Christmas can be wrapped up in one small baby, born in a manger? How is it possible that all of human history was changed—that we are now saved eternally—all because of one small baby, born in a manger?

Today in scripture and song we will be reminded of how this is all possible. We will learn how this *One small babe* was born in a manger, just as the prophets once foretold, just as the sweet song of the angels announced. This *One small babe* was God's great wondrous gift of love to all mankind.

Congregation Hymn: "What Child Is This?"

LSB 370



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mar - y's lap is
2 Why lies He in such mean es - tate Where ox and ass are
3 So bring Him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peas - ant, king, to



sleep - ing? Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet While
feed - ing? Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here The
own Him. The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; Let



shep - herds watch are keep - ing? This, this is
si - lent Word is plead - ing. Nails, spear shall
lov - ing hearts en - throne Him. Raise, raise the



Christ the king, Whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you;
song on high, The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The babe, the son of Mar - y!
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the son of Mar - y!
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-98 Tune: English, 16th cent. Text and tune: Public domain

Part I. As Prophets Once Foretold

Pastor: Let's go back to the very beginning—the beginning of everything—to creation. When God created the world He made a world that was beautiful and perfect. The people God had created, Adam and Eve, were holy and enjoyed a perfect relationship with God their Father in the special world he had made for them. We learn from Genesis that "God saw all that He had made and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). That expression in the original Hebrew means that it was *exceedingly* good, beautiful, excellent, and perfect in every way.

But then Satan entered into this perfect place, seeking to ruin God's perfect world and to destroy the people God loved. Adam and Eve were tempted and sinned. God saw their desperate need and came to their rescue with the first prophecy of a Savior from sin. Throughout the Old Testament, he continued to remind His people of their coming Savior through the words of the prophets.

Nolan: Genesis 3:15 – "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."


Elly: Isaiah 7:14 – "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call His name Immanuel."

Natalie: Jeremiah 23:5-6 – "'Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'That I will raise to David a Branch of Righteousness; A king shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth... Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'"

Vincent: Numbers 24:17 – "I see him, but not now. I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob. A scepter will rise up out of Israel."

Congregation Hymn: "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

LSB 359



1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing From ten - der stem hath
2 I - sa - iah 'twas 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 proph-ets long have
mind; With Mar - y we be - hold it, The vir - gin moth - er
air, Dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor The dark-ness ev - 'ry -
woe; O Sav - ior, King of glo - ry, Who dost our weak - ness

sung, It came, a flow - 'ret bright, A - mid the
kind, To show God's love a - right, She bore to
where. True man, yet ver - y God, From sin and
know: Bring us at length we pray To the bright

cold of win - ter, When half - spent was the night.
us a Sav - ior, When half - spent was the night.
death He saves us And light - ens ev - 'ry load.
courts of heav - en, And to the end - less day.

Text (sts. 1-2): tr. Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, alt.; (sts. 1-2, 4): German, 16th cent.; (st. 3): Friedrich L. C. Layriz, 1808-59; (st. 3): tr. Harriet R. K. Spaeth, 1845-1925; (st. 4): tr. John C. Mattes, 1876-1948 Tune: Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengeseng, 1599, Köln
Text and tune: Public domain

Part II. One Small Babe

Pastor: One of the many names that the Bible gives to Jesus is the WORD. John's gospel tells us that even before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He was the eternal creator God. When the time was just right, God sent His Son, the Savior, into the world. God's own Son became a flesh-and-blood baby whose holy life and perfect death on the cross would free the world from sin.

Natalie: John 1:1-3 – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without Him nothing was made that was made."


Koel: Galatians 4:4 – "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law."

Scripture reading – Luke 2:1-6 (KJV)

(Issac S.) And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. ² (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) ³ And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) ⁵ To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. ⁶ And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

Congregation Hymn: “Away in a Manger”

LSB 365



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed,
2 The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes,
3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask Thee to stay

The lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head.
But lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes.
Close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.

The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
I love Thee, Lord Je - sus! Look down from the sky,
Bless all the dear chil - dren in Thy ten - der care,

The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
And stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
And take us to heav - en to live with Thee there.

Text (sts. 1–2): Little Children’s Book, 1885, Philadelphia; (st. 3): Vineyard Songs, 1892, Louisville, alt.
Tune: William J. Kirkpatrick, 1838–1921
Text and tune: Public domain

Part III. One Sweet Song

Scripture reading - Luke 2:8-14 (KJV)

(Michael S.)⁸ And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. ¹⁰ And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Congregation Hymn: "Angels We Have Heard on High"

LSB 368

1 An - gels we have heard on high, Sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;

And the moun - tains in re - ply, Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some tid - ings be Which in - spire your heav' - n - ly song?
Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.

Refrain

Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - ri - a

- ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

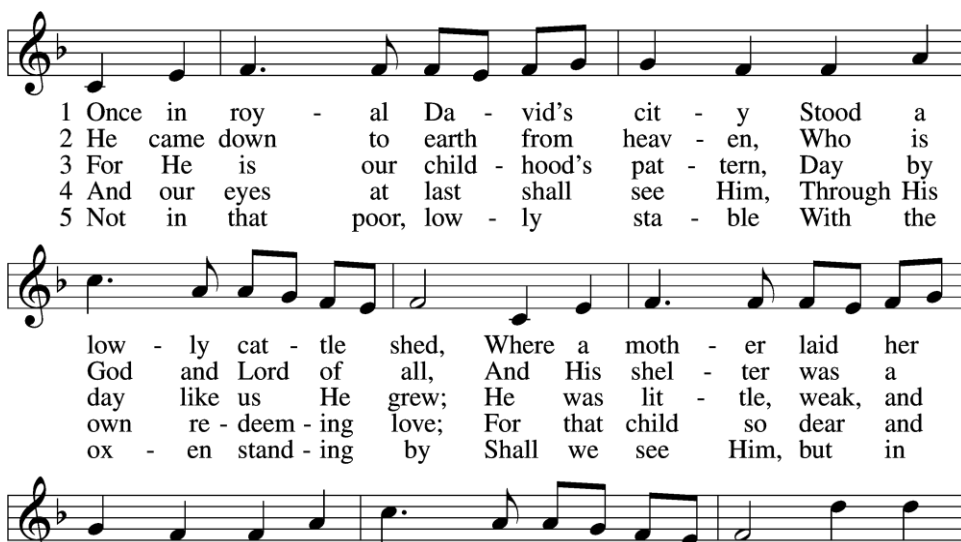
Text: tr. The Crown of Jesus, 1862, Part 2, London, alt. Text and tune: French
Text and tune: Public domain

Scripture reading - Luke 2:15-20 (KJV)

(Mark G.) ¹⁵ And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. ¹⁶ And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Congregation Hymn: "Once in Royal David's City"

LSB 376



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y Stood a
2 He came down to earth from heav - en, Who is
3 For He is our child - hood's pat - tern, Day by
4 And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His
5 Not in that poor, low - ly sta - ble With the

low - ly cat - tle shed, Where a moth - er laid her
God and Lord of all, And His shel - ter was a
day like us He grew; He was lit - tle, weak, and
own re - deem - ing love; For that child so dear and
ox - en stand - ing by Shall we see Him, but in

ba - by In a man - ger for His bed: Mar - y
sta - ble, And His cra - dle was a stall; With the
help - less, Tears and smiles like us He knew; And He
gen - tle Is our Lord in heav'n a - bove; And He
heav - en, Set at God's right hand on high. Then like



was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
poor and mean and low - ly Lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
feels for all our sad-ness, And He shares in all our glad-ness.
leads His chil-dren on To the place where He is gone.
stars His chil-dren, crowned, All in white, His praise will sound!

Text: Cecil F. Alexander, 1818–95, alt. Tune: Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805–76
Text and tune: Public domain

Part IV. God's Wondrous Gift of Love

Pastor: The story of Christmas can actually be summed up in one word- LOVE! God the Father has a great love for us sinful human beings. Out of love, He planned the way for us out of sin, death, and hell itself. Because of this, we welcome the coming of the Christ-child with great joy! At the same time, we know that the reason Jesus was born was to die on the cross and offer His life as a sacrifice to God, so that we might be redeemed. This is the greatest Christmas gift of all!

Koel: Romans 5:18 – “Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.”

Vincent: 1 John 4:10 – “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

Natalie: Ephesians 1:7-8 – “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight”

All: John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Children and Choir Song: "One Small Babe"

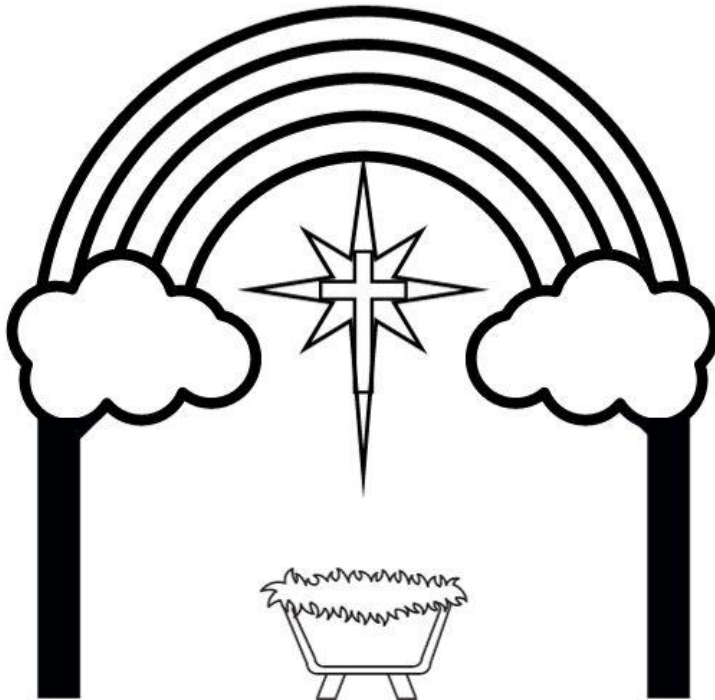
Text by Shawn M. Stringham. Music by Lynn S. Lund.

*One small babe in a manger lay, with heaven's light all around
All the Earth is holy made with baby Jesus' sound.
One still star over Bethlehem. Shepherds looked to see.
One bright light in endless sky. Sign of eternity.*

*One small babe sent from heav'n above. Son of God come to Earth.
Salvation promised to all men, at the Savior's birth.
Mother Mary watched him sleep, tonight he was her own
Soon he'd leave her loving arms and with his life atone.*

*One small babe sent from heaven above.
Son of God come to earth
Salvation promised at Christ's birth.*

*Mother Mary watched him sleep, tonight he was her own.
Soon he'd leave her loving arms and with his life atone. Son of God.*



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

✝ ***The offering plate is located on the table in the entryway.***

***The offering from tonight's service will go to
Mountain View Community Services Agency (CSA) & our church body's
Mission Development Fund, which helps fund overseas mission projects. ✝***

Christmas Eve Prayer (Pastor)

Lord's Prayer

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 shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✝ give you peace.



Recessional Hymn: "Silent Night"

LSB 363

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,
all is bright Round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
at the sight; Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
love's pure light Ra - diant beams from Thy ho - ly face
Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, Sleep in heav - en - ly
Heav'n - ly hosts sing, Al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy
peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
born! the Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Text: Franz Joseph Mohr, 1792–1848; tr. John F. Young, 1820–85
Tune: Franz Xaver Gruber, 1787–1863
Text and tune: Public domain

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tomorrow – *Christmas Day* - **St. Stephen – East Bay** (Hayward): **Joint Worship Service–11am**
(Worship Location: Grace Lutheran Church – 1836 B. Street – Hayward)

Next Sunday – December 31st - **St. Stephen – West** (Mt. View): **Joint Worship Service–10am**
(Sermon: Mark Gullerud; Liturgy: Scott Mueller)

No East Bay Worship

Online Worship Service - <https://www.sslcwest.org/worship.html>

Thank you! – Thank you to our students for bringing us the Christmas Gospel message tonight! We also thank all those who helped with our worship service this evening:



Participants: Natalie Lang (8th grade),
Koel Sharma (6th grade),
Vincent Lang (5th grade),
Vihaan Sharma (1nd grade),
Nolan Gullerud; Elizabeth Blank (K)
Thomas Gullerud; Emilio Gullerud (Preschool)

Directors: Mikkela Schmitt; Angela Gullerud

Readers: Isaac Schmitt Michael Slattengren; Mark Gullerud

Music: Barb Gullerud

The Advent Wreath



The Advent wreath is rich in symbolism, and as such it aids our worship as it reinforces our hope in the ultimate coming of our Lord. The wreath is covered with evergreen. Just as this species of tree is always green, so our hope for eternity is always alive because it rests upon the living Christ. The wreath is also in the form of a circle, which has no beginning and no end. What better way to picture that our life with God is everlasting.

The lighted candles are symbolic of the light of Christ and His Gospel, which alone can lift us out of our sin & spiritual darkness. The 4 Advent candles remind us of the 4000 years of waiting for Christ by the Old Testament world. The 3 purple candles are the color for repentance. The rose candle is the color for **joy**. Each of the 4 candles has been assigned a special name with special significance: **Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.**

The Christ Candle is the white candle in the center, and is lit on Christmas Eve. It signals that He Who is the Light of the world has been born.

The light these candles put forth seems small; so does the gospel at times. But to those in lonely darkness, it is the powerful light which shows the way to Heaven.