

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

## ***West & East Bay, Central Valley, and Southern California***

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

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Websites: [ststephenclc.org](http://ststephenclc.org) (East Bay) - [sslctest.org](http://sslctest.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](http://ssls.org)

**December 31, 2023 ✝ New Year's Eve**

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**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.

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✝ Preparation for Worship: Read Psalm 90 (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.sslctest.org/worship.html>**

Note: Sung responses will have musical notes 🎵 next to them.

All other responses will be spoken.

# Opening Hymn: 899 *Across the Sky the Shades of Night*

LSB 899



1 A - cross the sky the shades of night This New Year's Eve are  
2 Be - fore the cross sub - dued we bow, To You our prayer ad -  
3 We gath - er up in this brief hour The mem - 'ry of Your  
4 We now re - mem - ber, as we pray, Our dear ones in Your  
5 Then, gra - cious God, in years to come, We pray Your hand may



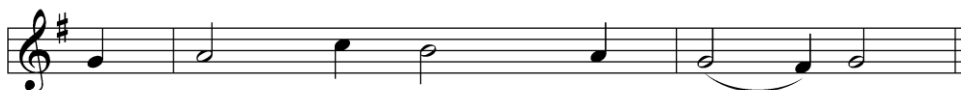
fleet - ing. We deck Your al - tar, Lord, with light, In  
dress - ing, Re - count - ing all Your mer - cies now, And  
mer - cies: Your won - drous good - ness, love, and pow'r Our  
car - ing Who bright - ly shine in end - less day, Past  
guide us, And, on - ward through our jour - ney home, Your



sol - emn wor - ship meet - ing; And as the year's last  
all our sins con - fess - ing; Be - seech - ing You this  
grate - ful song re - hears - es; For You have been our  
death and all de - spair - ing. At our life's end, Lord,  
mer - cy walk be - side us Un - til at last our



hours go by, We raise to You our ear - nest cry,  
com - ing year To keep us in Your faith and fear  
strength and stay In man - y a dark and drea - ry day  
as Your own, Bring us with them a - round Your throne,  
ran - somed life Is safe from per - il, toil, and strife



Once more Your love en - treat - ing.  
And crown us with Your bless - ing.  
Of sor - row and re - vers - es.  
The joys of heav - en shar - ing.  
When heav'n it - self shall hide us.

Text (sts. 1-3, 5): James Hamilton, 1819-96, alt.; (st. 4): Gregory J. Wismar, 1946

Tune: attr. Nicolaus Decius, c. 1485-after 1546

Text (sts. 1-3, 5) and tune: Public domain

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## **THE INVOCATION**

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

(TLH, p. 5)

**P** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## **THE CONFESSION OF SINS**

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

**P** Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God, our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

**P** Our help is in the name of the Lord.

**C** Who made heaven and earth.

**P** I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.

**C** And Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

**P** Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**C** O most merciful God, who hast given Thine only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Thy Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of Thee and of Thy will and true obedience to Thy Word, to the end that by Thy grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**P** Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in His name He gives power to become the sons of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Grant this, Lord, unto us all.

**C** Amen.

## **THE GLORIA PATRI**

*Latin for "Glory to the Father" (TLH, p. 6)*

**C**     **♪**     ***Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now,  
and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.***

## **THE KYRIE**

*Latin for "O Lord." We approach our Lord with a cry for help in all the needs of our earthly life. (TLH, p. 7)*

**♪**     ***Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Christ, have mercy upon us.  
Lord, have mercy upon us.***

## **THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS**

*In Latin "Gloria in excelsis Deo" means "Glory to God in the highest." We rejoice in our Lord who came to earth to bring us His peace. (TLH, p. 7)*

**♪**     ***Glory be to God on High, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.  
We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee.  
we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.  
O Lord God, heav'nly King, God the Father Almighty.  
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;  
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.  
Thou that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayer.  
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.  
For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord.  
Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,  
art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.***

## **THE SALUTATION** *(Greeting)*

**P**     The Lord be with you.  
**C**     And with thy spirit.

## **THE COLLECT FOR THE DAY**

*The main thoughts for the day are “collected” together in this prayer.*

**P** We pray:

Eternal God, we commit to Your mercy and forgiveness the year now ending and commend to Your blessing and love the times yet to come. In the New Year, dwell among us with Your Holy Spirit that we may always trust in the saving name of our Savior Jesus. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

*God speaks to us.*

### **First Reading**

***Romans 8:31-39 (EHV)***

***<sup>31</sup> What then will we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also graciously give us all things along with him?***

***<sup>33</sup> Who will bring an accusation against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies! <sup>34</sup> Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus, who died and, more than that, was raised to life, is the one who is at God’s right hand and who is also interceding for us! <sup>35</sup> What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? <sup>36</sup> Just as it is written:***

***For your sake we are being put to death all day long.***

***We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.***

***<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.***

***<sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things to come, nor powerful forces, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

## **THE GRADUAL**

*When God speaks to us in His Word it is natural for us to respond. We sing “Hallelujah!”—meaning “Praise the Lord!”*

**P** Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it. Hallelujah!

**C** Hallelujah!

**P** The second reading is from Luke 12:22-31.

**G** Glory be to Thee, O Lord!

## Second Reading

**Luke 12:22-31 (EHV)**

<sup>22</sup> *Jesus said to his disciples, "For that reason I tell you, stop worrying about your life, about what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. <sup>23</sup> Certainly life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. <sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap; they have no warehouse or barn; and yet God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than birds! <sup>25</sup> And who of you by worrying can add a single moment to his lifespan? <sup>26</sup> Since you are not able to do this little thing, why do you worry about the rest? <sup>27</sup> Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> If this is how God clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will he clothe you, you of little faith? <sup>29</sup> Do not constantly chase after what you will eat or what you will drink. Do not be worried about it. <sup>30</sup> To be sure, the nations of the world chase after all of these things, but your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> Instead, continue to seek the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you.*

**P** Here ends our Gospel reading.

**G** Praise be to Thee, O Christ!

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

*We boldly confess what we believe. (W.S. p. 15)*

**G** 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: 896 *Now Greet the Swiftly Changing Year***

LSB 896



1 Now greet the swift - ly chang - ing year With  
2 Re - mem - ber now the Son of God And  
3 This Je - sus came to end sin's war; This  
4 His love a - bun - dant far ex - ceeds The  
5 With Him as Lord to lead our way In



joy and pen - i - tence sin - cere. Re - joice! Re-joice! With  
how He shed His in - fant blood. Re - joice! Re-joice! With  
Name of names for us He bore. Re - joice! Re-joice! With  
vol - ume of a whole year's needs. Re - joice! Re-joice! With  
want and in pros - per - i - ty, What need we fear in



thanks em - brace An - oth - er year of grace.  
thanks em - brace An - oth - er year of grace.  
thanks em - brace An - oth - er year of grace.  
thanks em - brace An - oth - er year of grace.  
earth or space In this new year of grace!

Text: Cithara Sanctorum, 1636, Levoca; tr. Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1919–2008, alt.

Tune: Alfred V. Fedak, 1953

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## **THE SERMON**

**Psalm 121:1-2 (NKJV)**

**I will lift up my eyes to the hills -- From whence comes my help? <sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.**

**Sermon Theme: The LORD, who made heaven and earth,  
will be our source of help in 2024.**

by Pastor Mark Gullerud - preaching at St. Stephen-West (Mountain View)

## **THE OFFERTORY**

(TLH, p. 12-13)

***♪ Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from Thy presence,  
And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation,  
And uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.***

## **THE OFFERING OF THANKFUL HEARTS**

*In tangible evidence of our gratitude, we offer the Lord the gift of our money, remembering that He has first given to us that we might have to give to Him.*

***(† If you have an offering to give today, please place it in the plate in the church entryway. †)***



## Sermon Hymn: 897 *O Rejoice, Ye Christians, Loudly*

LSB 897



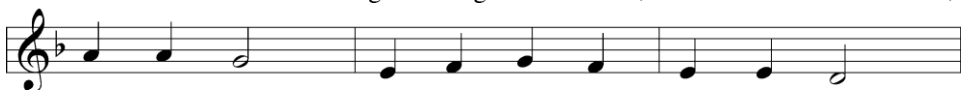
1 O re - joice, ye Chris - tians, loud - ly, For our joy has  
2 See, my soul, thy Sav - ior choos - es Weak - ness here and  
3 Lord, how shall I thank Thee right - ly? I ac - knowl - edge  
4 Je - sus, guard and guide Thy mem - bers, Fill them with Thy



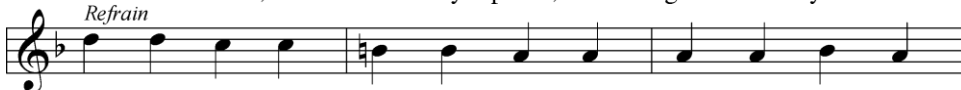
now be - gun; Won - drous things our God has done.  
pov - er - ty; In such love He comes to thee.  
that by Thee I am saved e - ter - nal - ly.  
bound - less grace, Hear their prayers in ev - 'ry place.



Tell a - broad His good - ness proud - ly, Who our race has  
Nei - ther crib nor cross re - fus - es; All He suf - fers  
Let me not for - get it light - ly, But to Thee at  
Fan to flame faith's glow - ing em - bers; Grant all Chris - tians,



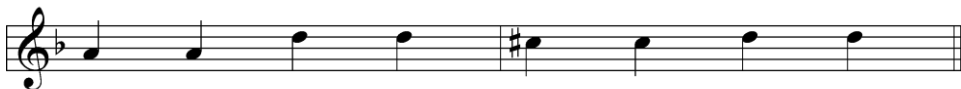
hon - ored thus, That He deigns to dwell with us.  
for thy good To re - deem thee by His blood.  
all times cleave And my heart true peace re - ceive.  
far and near, Ho - ly peace, a glad new year!



*Refrain*  
Joy, O joy, be - yond all glad - ness, Christ has done a -



way with sad - ness! Hence, all sor - row and re - pin - ing,



For the Sun of Grace is shin - ing!

Text: Christian Keimann, 1607-62; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-78, alt.  
Tune: Andreas Hammerschmidt, c. 1611-1675  
Text and tune: Public domain

## **THE GENERAL PRAYER / THE LORD'S PRAYER**

## **THE 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 upon you and be gracious unto you.  
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

**C**  **Amen, Amen, Amen.**

**Closing Hymn: 896 v. 6-7 Now Greet the Swiftly Changing Year** *(please stand for last verse)*



6 "All glo - ry be to God on high, And  
7 God, Fa - ther, Son, and Spir - it, hear! To  
peace on earth!" the an - gels cry. Re - joice! Re-joyce! With  
all our pleas in - cline Your ear; Up - on our lives rich  
thanks em - brace An - oth - er year of grace.  
bless - ing trace In this new year of grace.

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Today:

**St. Stephen – West (Mt. View): Worship – 10am**

Conducting worship: Mark Gullerud & Scott Mueller

**No East Bay (Hayward) Worship**

This Week: Mon. – Fri. – **No School at SSLS** (school resumes Mon. Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>)  
Thursday – **Pastor Luke Returns from Vacation** (see announcement below)

Next Sunday: *Epiphany Sunday*

1/7/24 **St. Stephen – West** (Mt. View): **Bible Class – 9am**  
**Worship w/ communion – 10am**

**St. Stephen – East Bay** (Hayward): **Worship w/ communion – 1pm**  
**“Annual Reports” Congr. Meeting – 2pm**

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

**Thank You!** – to Mark Gullerud and Scott Mueller for conducting our worship services today. Pastor Luke will return from visiting family in Wisconsin, Lord willing, this Thursday night (1/4). A happy & blessed New Year to you all!

**Communion & Installation of Church Council Officers – Next Sunday – 1/7** – We will have the installation of our church council officers during both of our worship services next Sunday (1/7). Also, we will be celebrating the Lord’s Supper next Sunday.

The East Bay congregation will be having an “Annual Reports” congregational meeting after the worship service next Sunday at 2pm. During the meeting the annual reports from the church council and pastor will be read.