

***“People of Christ  
Making a  
Difference”***

**Nativity of our Lord  
Christmas Eve**

**December 24, 2025**

**6:00PM**

## **WELCOME TO ST. STEPHEN'S!**

Children's bags can be found in the "Kid's Corner" of the narthex.

Restroom facilities are located down the hall on the left side.

First Aid, Emergency Equipment, and a wheelchair are located down the hall on the right by the stairwell.

If for any reason you must leave the sanctuary, the service is live streamed in the Agape Sunday School classroom. Any usher will be glad to direct you.

Listening devices and larger print bulletins are located in the narthex.  
Ushers are also available to assist you.

If you are a visitor feel free to sign-in using the QR code. Here's how it works:  
Point your camera at the image, tap the link that appears on your screen, and share whatever information you desire. Thank you! Hope to see you again soon!



## **GATHERING MUSIC**

Carol Selections by the String Quartet

*"The Holly and the Ivy"*  
*"What Child is This"*  
Adult Handbell Choir

Kevin McChesney  
Linda McKechnie

*"Gesu Bambino"*  
Hal McIntosh, soloist

Pietro A. Yon

*"The Christmas Angels"*  
Adult Handbell Choir

Michael Helman

*"Shepherd's Pipe Carol"*  
Gali Ramos, soloist

John Rutter

## **GREETING, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND THE PEACE**

### **PRELUDE**

Carol Selection by the String Quartet

(We Stand)

### **THE CHRISTMAS GREETING**

A child has been born for us, a son given to us.

**He is called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**And also with you.**

**GATHERING HYMN**

*"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"*

ELW 270

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!"

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

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! *Refrain*

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. *Refrain*

**INVOCATION AND DIALOGUE**

The Word was made flesh, and we beheld His glory.  
**Oh, come, let us worship Him.**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.  
**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.  
**We have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.**

For to us a Child is born, to us a son is given.  
**In Him was life, and the life was the light of humankind!**

Today Christ is born, today salvation has appeared.  
**Today the just exult and say, "Glory to God in the highest! Alleluia!"**

(We Sit)

Anthem

*"Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella"*

Shirley W. McRae

Bring a torch, Jeannette, Isabella, bring a torch to the cradle run!  
It is Jesus, good folk of the village, Christ is born and Mary's calling:  
Ah! Ah! beautiful is the Mother, Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the child.

It is wrong when the child is sleeping. It is wrong to talk so loud.  
Softly now as you come to the cradle lest the sound should waken Jesus,  
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Mother, Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the child!

Softly to the little stable, softly for a moment come;  
Look and see how charming is Jesus, how he is pure, his cheeks so rosy!  
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Mother, Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the child.

## FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7

<sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be end-less 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 Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## CHRIST CANDLE LIGHTING REFLECTION

The Grace of God is coming.

**Bringing salvation to all!**

A lit candle brings brightness into a room, but often there are areas left in shadow. You have to move those things that are blocking the light for the whole space to glow brightly. Isaiah tells the people that those who have “walked in darkness have seen a great light”; the light that will bring love, joy, peace, and hope to all of God’s creation. Where are the places in your community that have not yet felt the “great light” of God’s love? What do we, as God’s people, need to do so that the light of the Christ child will reach into the darkest corners of the world?

## CHRIST CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

In your good creation that has been darkened by our sinfulness, we humbly ask...

**good and just God, may your light come and shine into our darkness!**

On this night when we celebrate the brightness of your glory...

**we pray that all creation may rejoice in the light of the newborn Christ.**

(Light the Christ Candle.)

## CHRIST CANDLE LIGHTING HYMN

*“O Little Town of Bethlehem”*

ELW 279

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

### CHRIST CANDLE LIGHTING PRONOUNCEMENT

As we light this sacred candle on this glorious night we remember that: Many ages after God created the heavens and the earth, when man and woman were formed in God's own image; long after the great flood, when God set the rainbow in the clouds as a sign of the covenant; twenty-one centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah; thirteen centuries after Moses led God's people to freedom; eleven centuries from the time of Ruth and the Judges; a thousand years from the anointing of David as king; in the sixty-fifth week as Daniel's prophecy takes note; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the founding of the city of Rome; the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus; in the sixth age of the world, all earth being at peace, Jesus Christ, eternal God, Son of the eternal Father, willing to hallow the world by his coming in mercy, was born of the virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea. Today is the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.  
**Amen.**

### CHRIST CANDLE LIGHTING BLESSING

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing this Christmas,  
**So that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Anthem

*"Glory to God"*  
Adult Choir

Giovanni Pergolesi

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to his people on earth.  
Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace and goodwill to his people evermore.

### SECOND READING

Titus 2:11-14

<sup>11</sup>The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, <sup>13</sup>while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

(We Stand)

**GOSPEL PROCESSIONAL**    *"Angels We Have Heard on High"*

ELW 289

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains,  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

## THE HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2nd chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.  
<sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> 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 for them in the inn. <sup>8</sup> In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> 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: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" [<sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## GOSPEL RECESSIONAL

*"Angels We Have Heard on High"*

ELW 289

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing:  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

(We Sit)

## CHILDREN'S SERMON

Pastor Jason

## SERMON

Pastor Jason

(We Stand)

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*"O Come, All Ye Faithful"*

ELW 283

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!

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*

(We Sit)

### OFFERING

God calls us to be generous stewards of those gifts for the sake of our ministry near and far. You can support our ministry by putting your offering in the offering plate, mailing it to the church, giving online ([sslc.org](http://sslc.org)) or use the QR Code) or through the Givelify app. If you would like more details on direct deposit giving please contact our Parish Administrator, Mrs. Tonya Reynolds, at (803) 359-6562.



Anthem

*"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"*  
Adult Choir

Jantz A. Black

(We Stand)

### OFFERTORY HYMN

*"What Child Is This"*

ELW 296

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!

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 GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

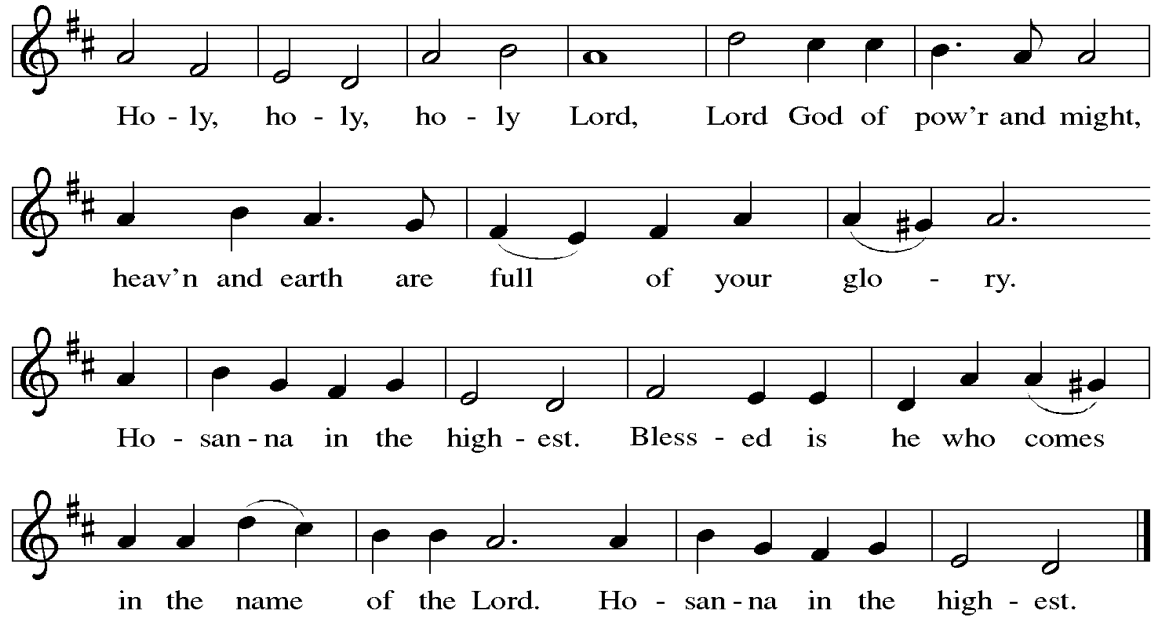
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

### THE PREFACE

### THE SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

### THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

#### 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.

#### INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

(We Sit)



## AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on  
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

## RECEPTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Christ welcomes you to this Holy Meal of the Baptized! We receive communion this evening at the center aisle. Communion will be brought to the front pews for those who wish to remain seated. Children who commune should be assisted by adults near them. Those unable to partake of wine or wheaten bread are assured of our Lord's presence in, with and under each element alone. For those with a gluten allergy, gluten-free wafers are available upon request.

Communion Music

*"O Holy Night"*

Adolphe Adam

Madison LaFontan, soloist

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining. It is the night of our dear Savior's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining 'til he appeared, and the world felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.  
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices! O night divine.  
O night when Christ was born. O night divine.

Led by the light of faith securely beaming, with glowing hearts by his cradle we stand.  
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming, here comes the wise men from Orient land.  
The king of kings lay thus in lowly manger. In all our trials born to be our friend.  
He knows our need; Our weakness is no stranger. Behold your King! Before him lowly bend!

*The Congregation is encouraged to participate in the following Communion Hymn.  
The hymn can be found in the back portion of the LBW (Green) Hymnal in your pew rack.*

Communion Hymns

*"Away in a Manger"*

LBW 67

*"The First Noel"*

LBW 56

(We Stand)

## BLESSING OF THE COMMUNICANTS

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.  
**Amen.**

### **CANDLE-LIGHTING**

Candles will be distributed to worshippers upon entering. The pastors will light their candles from the Christ Candle, symbolizing Jesus as the Light of the World. After the pastors have lit their candles please turn yours on and hold it high for all to see. Candles will be taken up in the narthex as you exit.

### **CANDLE-LIGHTING HYMN**

*“Silent Night, Holy Night”*

ELW 281

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.

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!

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.

### **BLESSING OF THE CONGREGATION**

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, the peace of the Christ child, and may almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **SENDING HYMN**

*“Joy to the World”*

ELW 267

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.

Joy to the world, 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.

No more let sin and sorrow grow, Nor 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.

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.

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the good news that Christ is born!

**Thanks be to God.**

### **POSTLUDE**

*“God Rest You Merry Gentlemen”*

Wilbur Held

## **Saturday, December 24, 2025**

### **Nativity of Our Lord/Christmas Eve**

#### **Salvation to All**

“Good news” is a familiar phrase for Christians, but in the world outside the bible the Greek word we translate as “bringing. . .good news” (Luke 2:10) was used to announce a new emperor. The Emperor Augustus commands that the world be counted, and those with the least are required to do the most to fulfill the requirements of those in power. The scene at the manger, however, is anything but imperial. In Bethlehem, God’s power is revealed in weakness, and the people who count include even the migrant laborers keeping watch over their flocks by night.

What does it mean this Christmas for us to hear that God is found in the hidden, the neglected, the immodest places of the world? What does it mean for us this year to know that when God takes a census, all the people of the world matter as much as any citizen of any empire?

The Nativity of Our Lord is the story of God’s reign spilling over the boundaries set by the powerful people of the world and into the margins. Dark nights and fragile infants interrupted by migrant laborers and choirs of angels point to a vision of the world as it should be, where “being connected” to the right people is replaced by being interconnected through a spirit of unity that brings us all out of the margins and into the center of life. In the infant Jesus, God declares a new standard for power, a word of hope, “good news” for all who are fragile, all who are weak, all who are overlooked, all who are despised, all who are abandoned, all who are homeless, all who are hovering between life and death. The festival of the incarnation is indeed “salvation to all” (Titus 2:11).

**The Poinsettias** used to enhance our worship services today may be picked up after the 11:00PM worship service tonight. The church will also be open for flower pick-up on the circular driveway side from 1–4PM on Friday, December 26th.

**SERVING TODAY:**

Greeters: Shannon Burnett

Communion Assistants: Shannon Burnett and Ann Clark

Order of St. Stephen's: [A] Stone Lewis [C] Jackson Rawl [BB] Connor Geary  
[TB] Gracen Geary [TB] Audrey Lewis

Soloists: Madison LaFontan, Hal McIntosh, and Gali Ramos

String Quartet: Catherine Hazan, Korcan Kostuk, Violins; Cierra Bell, Viola; Paul Maxwell, Cello

Instrumentalists: Joanna Taylor, flutist; Matthew Jones and Luke Wenzel, percussionists

**The Church Staff**

**Website: [www.sslc.org](http://www.sslc.org)**

The Rev. Jason T. Antley

The Rev. Ralph G. Hill

Mrs. Shannon Burnett, Director of Family Life

Mrs. Tonya Reynolds, Parish Administrator

Ms. Susan Wilson, Director of Music/Organist

Mrs. Julie Tworzyanski, Preschool Director

Mrs. Sylvia Looney, Organist Emeritus

**Sunday School Information:**

**Locations for Children's Classes**

**Locations for Adult Classes**

<b>Nursery</b> – Room #105	<b>Agape Adult Class</b> Room #102 (Closest to Narthex)
<b>2—4 year olds &amp; 5K</b> – Room #103	<b>Saints &amp; Sinners with PJ and PR</b> Room #203 (Large Upstairs Room)
<b>1<sup>st</sup>—5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b> – Room # 216	<b>Women Digging Deeper</b> Parlor
<b>6<sup>th</sup>—8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b> – Room #212	For those not attending a Sunday School class but waiting on a child to get out of one, feel free to sit in the Social Hall!
<b>9<sup>th</sup>—12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b> – Room #217	If you are interested in beginning a new Sunday School class please contact Mrs. Shannon.

If you are not receiving the weekly announcements and monthly newsletter via email and would like to receive them, please email Shannon ([Shannon@ssl.org](mailto:Shannon@ssl.org)) so she can add you to the distribution list.

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