

# St. Stephanus Lutheran Church

Preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ for 133 Years



Dec. 31, 2023  
First Sunday after Christmas

**Of the three Christmas hymns of Martin Luther** (1483-1546), none is more beloved than "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come." Appearing in print for the first time in 1535, it bears the heading "Ein kinder lied auff die Weinacht Christi" ("A children's song on the birth of Christ."). According to legend, Luther wrote it as a kind of Christmas pageant for his own five surviving children and other members of his household for their 1534 family celebration of Christmas. The first stanza is a parody and contrafact (a replacement text in an existing song) of a secular "garland song" of the fifteenth century. A young man would sing the refrain, then would pose a riddle to one of the girls sitting in a circle. If she could not solve the riddle, she would have to give him her garland (or wreath). In the folk song, a traveling ballad singer comes into a marketplace bearing news from afar, which he offers to share with the people in the square. Luther picks up on this picture, using the image of an angel coming from the "foreign land" of heaven into the circle of the shepherds keeping watch, offering to share the good news with them of what has just happened in Bethlehem.

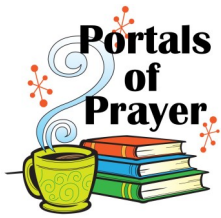
## **Music in the Service:**

**Prelude:** Partita on "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" - Paul Manz

**Postlude:** Toccata Concerto No. 6 (Divinum Mysterium) - Franklin D. Ashdown



**Today's Altar flowers are given by:** the family of Kathy Fleischhacker in celebration and thanksgiving for her 90th birthday on January 3rd.



**Portals of Prayer** books have arrived. They are located at the bottom of the lobby stairs in the revolving bookcase.

~Clarice~



**The 2024 Offering Envelopes are out and ready for you to pick up!!**

**I want to thank** everyone who signed up for flowers in 2023! I greatly appreciate your generosity to make our altar and worship so beautiful. ~Clarice Anderson~

**The new flower chart for 2024 (January—December) is up and ready!**

**We need YOUR help!** Please look at the flower chart. It is located between the narthex mailboxes and the elevator. There are still spots open to request flowers. The flowers may be dedicated to a special occasion, in thanks for something, in honor of a person or group, or just because you want to make sure we have flowers to praise and honor God. You are asked to take your flowers home right after the church service.

1 bouquet of flowers is \$27.50 and 2 bouquets of flowers are \$55.00. If paying by check make it out to St. Stephanus Lutheran Church and in the memo write Flowers.

## Prayer Requests

### Healing/Peace

Chris Brooks  
Bill Baker  
Rich Carter  
Karen Arnold  
Deb Holtz  
Karen Trudeau  
Jeremy  
Dave & Mickey Zinter

### Blessings/Guidance

Camp Omega  
Concordia University

## Week Ahead

### SUNDAY, Dec. 31

9:30 AM ✝ Traditional Worship  
10:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School

### MONDAY, Jan. 1

### TUESDAY, Jan. 2

### WEDNESDAY, Jan. 3

### THURSDAY, Jan. 4

### FRIDAY, Jan. 5

### SATURDAY, Jan. 6

### SUNDAY, Jan. 7

9:30 AM ✝ Traditional Worship  
10:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School

✝ Communion Service



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Phone: (612) 208-7388

DCE (Youth & Families): Megan Hoffman  
[youth@saintstephanus.org](mailto:youth@saintstephanus.org)

WORSHIP LEADER: Bruce Anderson  
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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:  
Clarice Anderson  
[saintstephanus@comcast.net](mailto:saintstephanus@comcast.net)

OFFICE HOURS:  
Monday to Friday 8 AM to 1 PM  
Bulletin Deadline: 11 AM Wed

Bible readings are located at  
[www.saintstephanus.org](http://www.saintstephanus.org)  
under the "WORSHIP" tab.

Worship Service Stream at  
[www.saintstephanus.org](http://www.saintstephanus.org)

Submit prayer requests at  
<https://forms.gle/JLDCstJFWRbu25PT7>

### Our Mission Statement:

To proclaim the Gospel through Word and Sacrament to our membership, our communities and our world.

### Our Vision:

Connecting people with Jesus Christ and each other through worship, learning and service.

## Upcoming Birthdays, Feasts & Commemoration

Dec. 31: *Eve of the Circumcision & Name of Jesus/New Year's Eve*

Jan. 1: *Circumcision & Name of Jesus*

Jan. 2: Terianne Bender, J. K. Wilhelm Loebe, Pastor

Jan. 3: Kathy Fleischhacker

Jan. 4:

Jan. 5:

Jan. 6: Greg Zinter

Jan. 7: Beverly Piepkorn



### Serving in today's worship

Lector: Sharon Savard

Communion Assistants: Ron Brubak & Jim Radtke

Greeter: Tarrie Culbert & Emmy Treichel

Cantor: