

CHRISTMAS PREPARATIONS

How are your preparations coming?

(Have you considered what God has in mind?)

The Divine Service

GOD SENDS HIS WORD TO PREPARE US

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Invocation

L: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Opening Prayer

L: O God of wholeness, when we consider the lack of balance and wholeness in our lives, the one-sided spiritualities with which we attempt to appease you, to appear good in the eyes of others, yet primarily seeking to please ourselves, we come face to face with our need for a holistic spiritual life. Help us, we pray, to hunger and thirst for the wholeness you have for us in Christ – and the completion of your work in us on the last day. Empower us to ignore what the world says, to surrender to you whatever stands in the way of your healing in us, and to say in all circumstances,

C: **I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word. Amen.**

Call to Worship

“Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending”

LSB 336

Savior of the Nations Come – TO US

L: Long before both Joseph and Mary were born, in a land they likely never traveled to, the promise we hear fulfilled through them was made first to Adam and Eve when the Lord said to the serpent in the garden:

C: **“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”**

L: Centuries later the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.” He then renewed the promise first made to Adam and Eve as he said,

C: **“I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”**

L: Saint John tells us of the fulfillment of this promise as he writes, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

C: **“The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.**

L: “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

C: **“No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.”**

L: Adam and Eve may have thought that God was fulfilling the promise in Cain. Abraham had to change his plan many times, and then had to wait many years before Isaac was born. Each thought they knew how God would keep his promises,

C: **But God had something bigger in mind.**

(pause to reflect)

Prayer of Preparation

L: Lord Jesus, fulfiller of the promise, in your first coming you opened the door for us and all to be participants in your eternal kingdom.

C: **Lord, Jesus, help us to see your glory and to share the light of your kingdom with all.**

L: Lord Jesus Christ, our hope and eternal rest, you have promised that when you return all believers will be given glorified bodies like yours and placed into a new and perfect creation.

C: **Lord Jesus, keep us ever ready for your coming.**

L: Lord Christ, our hope and eternal rest, by the work of your Holy Spirit, keep us strong in your word, that we might be faithful stewards until the end.

C: **Lord Jesus, keep us ever ready for your coming, that we might enjoy your presence on earth and see you face to face in eternity. Amen.**

The Peace

Anthem

“Gaudate!”

(Rejoice! Christ is Born of the Virgin Mary)

M. Burkhardt

Scripture Reading

Micah 5:2-5a

“The Greatest from the Least”

²But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴ And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. ⁵ And he shall be their peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces.

R: This is the word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

The Introit

“Gloria”

[WOV 640]

Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia!
(repeat three times)

The Rest of the Story

Luke 2:1-6, Matthew 1:22-23

Immanuel – our Redeemer and Lord – is with us always.

¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

R: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Children’s Sermon

(please record your attendance)

Please list each attendee separate and check if participating in communion.

Visitors please fill out top portion with your address etc.

After the attendance is recorded for your pew, please tear off sheet and place in folder slightly higher for ease of collection. Thank you!

Hymn of the Day

“O Sing of Christ”

LSB 362

Sermon

“Things are NOT as They Appear to Be”

Micah 5:2

The Apostles Creed

LSB inside back cover

Meditation and Prayer

The Great “O” Antiphons

L: O Dayspring, splendor of light everlasting:

C: **Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.**

L: O King of the nations, the ruler they long for, the cornerstone uniting all people:

C: **Come and save us all, whom you formed out of clay.**

(after each petition)

L: Lord in your mercy.

C: **Hear our prayer.**

L: O Emmanuel, our king and our Lord, the anointed for the nations and their Savior:

C: **Come and save us, O Lord Jesus. Amen.**

Announcements

Offering

God expects us to provide for our families.

“But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Timothy 5:8)

Voluntary

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

J. Honore

Sending Prayer

Benediction

Sending Hymn

“Away in a Manger”

LSB 365

*You are now entering
the (your)
Mission Field*

*“The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few.
Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send YOU out into his harvest.”
(Matthew 9:37-38)*

2020 Envelopes are available in the west hallway! Please stop by the table, print your name on the list next to the envelope # you are taking home. Information for electronic giving is also available. If you have any questions, contact Linda in the church office. **Please, do not use these envelopes until 2020!**



On-line Giving - Did you forget your mission support envelope/offering? You can scan this Quick Response (QR) code, with a QR decoder on your smart phone, it will take you to our on-line giving form, where you can have your mission support offering automatically taken from your checking account, or use your credit or debit card. You can also set up recurring giving! Visit our web page for more on-line giving options.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS: The church office will be closed December 24 through January 5, except for scheduled activities and special requests. Staff will be in the building as needed, making sure that all the work gets done, and that all voicemails are handled. If you have a need to be in the building during these two weeks – outside of worship – please be sure to make appropriate arrangements beforehand.

New T – 1 K We have free New Testaments, free reading guides, and more. Our intent is to do more than just give away free Bibles, we wish to actually help people to read and understand the books we distribute. We currently have given out over 700 bibles, with most of them registered NT readers. We encourage you to a) keep inviting people to read with us, and b) encouraging people to invite others. If you are interested, or would like more information, you can either, get information in the back of the church or contact the office.



How About Another Blessing from God? The only thing it will cost you is time . . . one hour a week! There are 168 hours in a week, so really, one hour (less than 1%) isn't that much to give, is it? In Luke 11, Jesus says, **“Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it.”** Did you see the promise in this verse? If we spend time in God's Word, **we will be blessed.** Wow! Who doesn't need a blessing from God every day? Everything we have is His and He is willing to share all of those blessings with us . . . The leadership of STL, charged with your spiritual welfare, hopes everyone will be involved in a Faith Hope Love (FHL) Group in 2020. Experience more blessings from God by spending time studying His Word with a small group of Christians. Visit one or more of the 11 FHL Groups here at St. Thomas and you'll be sure to find one that suits your personality and needs. As Luke 11 reminds us, you will be blessed by participating in an FHL Group. Please contact any of our FHL Leaders (find them at stl-eastpointe.org) with questions. We pray that the Holy Spirit will lead you to “Another Blessing” in an FHL Group here at St. Thomas!

NEXT SUNDAY

The 1st Sunday after Christmas

December 29, 2019

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 63:7-14 / Matthew 2:13-23

Sermon Topic: *“The Christmas Fade”* – text: Matthew 2:16-18

Portal of Prayer – Large and small print

Now available around the building (no longer in mailboxes)

Pick up a copy for a friend when you pick up your copy!

People to People – the St. Thomas Newsletter

Decembers is now available around the building (no longer in mailboxes)

Connecting Individuals to Jesus and to One Another Educating Minds – Growing Faith – Serving People

We are glad you are here. When you come to worship at STL, you are among friends and family. If you are curious to learn more out ministry in the community, go to www.stl-eastpointe.org, or like us on Face Book. To get your questions answered in a more personal way, contact the church office (586-772-3370) and ask for a pastor to give you a call (or just check the box in the Record of Fellowship folder).

Our Confession of Faith

As members of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LC-MS), we subscribe to the three ecumenical creeds (Apostles, Nicene and Athanasian) and the Christian faith as confessed in the Book of Concord. This includes believing that:

- Jesus Christ is both true God and true man who died for our sins and rose again to save us.
- His body/blood are truly present in communion under the form of bread/wine (see page 326).
- Communion is, among other things, an expression of doctrinal unity.
- Infant baptism is a Means of Grace through which God delivers one from sin and gives eternal salvation to all who believe (page 325 in Lutheran Service Book).

Serving in God's House

Preacher: Rev. Mark W. Hetzner **Liturgist:** Deacon Don Cooley
Organist: Lori Stolzenfeld **Music:** Kapelle, Handbells, Matthew Northcott
Sanctuary Team: Jeff Lindeman **Reader:** Mary Lee McKay, Matthew Northcott
Servers: Tim Hubmeier, Tim Phaneuf, Tim Kruse, Kregg Fritsch
Greeters: Roy & Irene Leidich, Christopher deRuiter
Altar Guild: Dana Haenke-Adam & Randa Haenke-Swanboro

*Weekly Worship with Communion - Sunday at 9:30 a.m.
Third Sunday of the month at Noon
Monday at 7:30 p.m.*

*Faith Hope Love Ministries throughout the week
Crosstraining for children Sunday at 10:45 a.m.*

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Watch services on Facebook – videotaping in progress during service

**Please Remember in Your Prayers this Week
December 22, 2019**

Our Primary Prayer focus this week is upon God's Work in the STL family:

- Moving us toward greater and more active love for our neighbor.
- As he sends us out to encourage many to join us for Christmas worship.
- Filling us with faith, hope and love.
- Using this holiday season to prepare us for Christ's mighty works in our midst during the year ahead.

To connect to the STL PRAYER CHAIN, contact Karen Dolan (mdolan421@gmail.com)

And we remember the unborn and newly born, the elderly and those nearing life's end, remembering all grieving families, those who are in hospice care.

† In Our Thoughts and Prayers †

†**God's Healing Hand on:** Adam Vincent, Elise Dawada (daughter of Tom & Shannon) , Elsie Adams, Sherry Kourlos, Renee Thelen, Carol Ferdinande, Alan Borowiak, Diane Ustick, Brenda Finger, Alice Schmidt (mother of Lori Stolzenfeld), Scott Spencer (friend of Cardamones), Karl Hallberg (son-in-law of Cardamones), John Belvedere (son-in-law of Caroline Henze), Anthony Giacalone (son of friend of Deb Kujawski), Kari Inglesoll (niece of Diane Carr), Paul Odendahl (brother-in-law of Eleanor Cardamone), Rose Collins (cousin of Deb Kujawski), Rose Collins (cousin of Deb Kujawski), Roseanne (friend of Karen Hubbard).

†**Continued prayers for Healing & Strength for:** Sieg Gannon, Chris Huber, Cristal Morris (former preschool aide), John Lemke (friend of Monica Hetzner), Beth White, Bob LaRoche and Jan Adams (family of Elsie Adams), Alyssa Delano (granddaughter of Theresa Delano), Tiffany Crow (granddaughter of Marilyn Redmond), Denise Godfrey (sister of Deborah Kujawski), Kathy Johnson (friend of Vicki Leberg), Claire Armstrong (granddaughter of Clyde & Carolyn Armstrong), Shirley Grassa (aunt of Deborah Kujawski), Luella Riske (granddaughter of Jim, Thrivent Rep.).



Next Sunday bring your Mite Box!

Upcoming Events:



(visit the web page or see the STL publication for more information)



Christmas Eve

"Carols, Candles, and Communion"

4:00 p.m. - Festival Service

11:00 p.m. - "Unplugged" Service

Christmas Morning Communion @ 9:30 a.m.

"Includes a special message for the children"

New Year's Eve Worship – 5:00 p.m.

Coming in 2020

Un-decorate the church

January 11th @ 9 a.m.

Welcome "2020" Open House - January 12th

FPU - beginning January 15th

(Financial Peace University)

Go to <https://www.fpu.com/1107890> to register.

Watch for more information or call the church office.



FOURTH SUNDAY

OF

Advent

December 22, 2019

Saint Thomas Lutheran

23801 Kelly Road, Eastpointe, Michigan 48021 - 586-772-3370

www.stl-eastpointe.org

Rev. Mark W. Hetzner, Senior Pastor

Rev. Richard A. VanBriggle, Specific Ministry Pastor

Deacon Don Cooley