

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
"People of Christ Making a Difference"
119 N Church Street
Lexington, SC

Christmas Eve
December 24, 2020

WELCOME TO OUR VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICE!

During this time of social distancing here are a few things to remember:

We are back to regular office hours Monday through Friday. Please don't hesitate to let us know how we can help! The pastors are available by calling the church (359-6562), calling the Crisis Care Line after hours (808-6471), or emailing them (pat@ssl.org and/or jasonantley@earthlink.net)

If you visit our website (www.ssl.org) you will see additions to the main page. On your phone, please make sure you are on the full website (just scroll down and click the icon that says full website). At the top you will see SIX RED BOXES. Here are the details:

Box 1) **"Weekly Bulletins"** – which will correspond to the services on YouTube.

Box 2) **"Virtual Communion"** – explanation and instructions for communing at home during virtual worship.

Box 3) **"Click Here For Our YouTube"** – where you can click to participate in our virtual worship services, or you can copy and paste tinyurl.com/SSLCWorship into your browser to take you there directly. Services will be livestreamed at 12:30 PM on Wednesdays and 8:30 AM on Sundays.

Box 4) **"Latest Church Update"** – where we will post the latest COVID-19 church update.

Box 5) **"Online Giving"** – Don't forget to support our ministry during this time apart by either mailing your donations to the church (119 N Church Street, Lexington, SC 29072), giving online, or giving through the Givelify app. This may also be a time to consider direct deposit giving. For more details please call the church office to contact our Parish Administrator, Mrs. Tonya Reynolds.

Box 6) **"Green Sheet Announcements"** – this is the green bulletin insert you would normally get on Sunday.

If you need any sort of assistance (ie needing food, getting groceries or prescriptions, going to medical appointments, anything at all), please call the church office or one of the pastors. We have folks who are willing to help in any way they can! Please take time to call folks who may not have a strong network and may be in need. Neighbors helping neighbors is one way we can be "People of Christ Making a Difference!"

We will continue sending out emails but you can also check out our website and our Facebook page for updates. God bless you! We love you! Stay safe out there!

GATHERING MUSIC

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A MOMENT FOR PEACE

PRELUDE

BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Holy One of Israel, the Word made flesh, the Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Gathered in the name of Jesus, let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor.

Gracious God,

in Christ Jesus you come among us as light shining in darkness. We confess our failure to welcome this light. Forgive us and renew our hope, so that we may live in the light of your grace, and welcome the truth of Christ the Lord. Amen.

I bring you good news of great joy for all the people: To you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord. Your sins are forgiven in + Jesus' name.

Amen.

CHRISTMAS DIALOGUE

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

And also with you.

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 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!"

THE SALUTATION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

FIRST READING

Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness--on them light has shined.³You 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. ⁴For 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. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For 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. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless 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.

THE 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?

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.)

CANDLE LIGHTING HYMN

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

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; O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

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.

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.

SECOND READING

Titus 2:11-14

¹¹The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He 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.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. Alleluia.

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

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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. ⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" [¹⁵When 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." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The 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.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

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.

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.

APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

OFFERING

It is during times like these that we notice an even greater purpose for our ministry and life together in Christ as we love and support each other and the world around us. Don't forget to support our ministry by mailing your offering to the church, giving online (www.sslc.org) or through the Givelify app. This may also be a time to consider direct deposit giving. For more details please contact our Parish Administrator, Mrs. Tonya Reynolds, at (803) 359-6562.

Anthem

"O Holy Night"

Bailey Slice Parker

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together.

Gracious God, you came to us as one unknown, bringing joy and salvation to the earth. Nourish us at your banquet table, that with all who welcome your birth we may proclaim your peace, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

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 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.

RECEPTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Christ welcomes you to this Holy Meal of the Baptized! This Holy Sacrament is a fundamental part of how we participate in worship and receive Christ's body and blood, given and shed for us for the forgiveness of our sins. It is customary to use bread and wine for this meal, however with the given circumstances we invite you to find whatever is most appropriate in your context for your family to share. As you gather together to receive the real presence of Christ found in, with, and under the elements, be assured that the gifts we are given by God in the Holy Sacrament transcend space and time. May we be fed and nourished by God through this meal so that we may persevere and continue in discipleship this and every day.

(As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ shed for you.

The communicant may say: "Amen.")

BLESSING OF THE COMMUNICANTS

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

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us from your very self with the body and blood of Christ. Through this mystery, send us forth to proclaim your promise to a world in need, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

CANDLE-LIGHTING

Please find a candle within your context. 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.

CANDLE-LIGHTING HYMN

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

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! 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 SONG

“Joy to the World”

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.

(Please extinguish your candle.)

DISMISSAL

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

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

The Poinsettias used to enhance our worship services today may be picked up after the 7:00PM worship service tonight. The church will also be open on the circular driveway side from 12:30–5PM for flower pick-up on Sunday, December 27th.

The Church Staff

Crisis Care Line: 808-6471

Website: www.sslc.org

The Rev. Dr. Patrick W. Riddle

Mrs. Shannon Burnett, Director of Family Life

Mr. Stephen Abbott, Seminarian

Mrs. Tonya Reynolds, Parish Administrator

The Rev. Jason T. Antley

Mrs. Bailey Slice Parker, Music Director

Mrs. Beth Haggard, Preschool Director

Mr. Eric Abramson, Sexton

The Rev. Dr. Dennis Bolton, Pastor for Welcome and Visitation

Mrs. Sylvia Looney, Organist Emeritus

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