



Third
Sunday of Advent

December 13, 2020

Saint Thomas Lutheran

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

www.stl-eastpointe.org

Rev. Mark W. Hetzner, Senior Pastor

Specific Ministry Pastor - Rev. Richard A. VanBriggle, Deacon Don Cooley

Saint Thomas Lutheran

Eastpointe, Michigan

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

We are here to serve our community. As you worship with us online, the Lord Jesus is at work, uniting us as friends and family. If you are curious to learn more out ministry in the community, go to www.st-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/staff member to give you a call.

Divine Service

Stories of God @ Work

RECEIVING THE GOOD NEWS

Opening Praise

“Hark the Glad Sound”

[LSB 349]

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes, The Savior promised long;
Let ev’ry heart prepare a throne And ev’ry voice a song.

He comes the pris’ners to release, In Satan’s bondage held.
The gates of brass before Him burst, The iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind, The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace To enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace, Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heav’n’s eternal arches ring With Thy belovèd name.

Entering Prayers

[Isaiah 61]

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

C: Amen.

L: The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

C: He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted and to proclaim liberty to the captives.

L: To proclaim liberty to the captives and to comfort all who mourn.

C: That they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.

L: Almighty God, you once called John the Baptist to give witness to the coming of your Son and to prepare his way. Grant us, your people, the wisdom to see your purpose today and the openness to hear your

will, that we may witness to Christ's coming and so prepare his way; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise

"Surely It Is God Who Saves Me"

[WOV 635]
(tune LSB 686)

Surely it is God who saves me; I shall trust and have no fear.
For the Lord defends and shields me and his saving help is near.
So rejoice as you draw water from salvation's healing spring;
in the day of your deliv'rance that the Lord, his mercies sing.

Make God's deeds known to the peoples; tell out his exalted name.
Praise the Lord, who has done great things; all his works God's might proclaim.
Zion, lift your voice in singing; for with you has come to dwell,
in your very midst, the great and Holy One of Israel.

Text: Carl P. Daw, Jr, © 1982, 1990 Hope Publishing Co.

The Holy Gospel

John 1:6-8, 19-27

L: The Holy Gospel according to Saint John, chapter 1.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. . . .

¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." ²²So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, **"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."**

²⁵They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, **"I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."**

L: This is the Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Announcements

Children's Sermon and Attendance Registration

Please let us know you are watching by sending us a comment or an emoji.

O God of love, O King of peace, Make wars throughout the world to cease;
The rage of nations now restrain: Give peace, O God, give peace again!

Whom shall we trust but Thee, O Lord? Where rest but on Thy faithful Word?
None ever called on Thee in vain: Give peace, O God, give peace again!

Where saints and angels dwell above, All hearts are knit in holy love;
O bind us in that heav’nly chain: Give peace, O God, give peace again!

RESPONDING TO THE GOOD NEWS

(see the back cover for this week’s prayer concerns)

The Prayer of the Church

L: Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.
(after each petition)

L: Let us pray to the Lord:

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

L: Into Your hands, Father, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Our Primary Prayer focus for this week is on Christ’s people on earth:

Granting us a bold, clear, and loving witness to the world.

Giving us hearts that remain cautious, courteous, courageous, and creative.

For children to be raised in the nurture and encouragement of the Gospel.

For everyone in our ‘virtual congregation’.

And we remember all children who hear the gospel in church and from their parents, and those in hospice care.

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

† In Our Thoughts and Prayers †

†**For Loved Ones Called Home:** The family of Donald Berkseth, who was called home on 12/3. The family of Alan Knopp, former teacher, who was called home last Sunday. The family of Rich Miller, son-in-law of the Cherry’s, who was called home on 12/8.

†**God’s Healing Hand on:** Henry & Laurie Bradychok, Grace Metzner, Veronica Morris, Ron Hess, Jane Gurnack, Betty Nelson (sister of Caroline Henze), Brad Golm (friend of Caroline Henze), Ashley O’Connor, Randy Scharrer (cousin of Monica Hetzner), Mark Topel (son of Stan & Mae), Patrick Morann and family (friends of Sue Wensink), Raymond and Marvelin Gadowski (cousins of Marilyn Edwards).

†**Continued prayers for Healing & Strength for:** Lori Kucharek, Sieg Gannon, Elsie Adams, Chris Huber, John Lemke (friend of Monica Hetzner), Beth White, Robert Laroche and Jan Adams (family of Elsie Adams), Tiffany Crow (granddaughter of Marilyn Redmond), Kathy Johnson (friend of Vicki Leberg), Claire Armstrong (granddaughter of Clyde & Carolyn Armstrong), Luella Riske (granddaughter of Jim, Thrivent Rep.), Scott Spencer (friend of Cardamone’s), Karl Hallberg (son-in-law of Cardamone’s), Paul Odendahl (brother-in-law of Eleanor Cardamone), Payton Gifford (great-granddaughter of Jane Gurnack), Doug Bogen (nephew of Mary Lee McKay), Emily Henze (daughter-in-law of Caroline).

Voluntary



EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT THE STL MISSION There is a variety of ways to give your support to the mission of STL. For many the easiest is to simply mail in a check or drop your offering off at the church. If you prefer electronic giving, STL offers multiple options:

- Text “GIVE” to 1-586-800-2233
- Visit: <https://www.stl-eastpointe.org/2015/07/13/mission-support/>
- Go to <https://www.elexiogiving.com/app/giving/stthoms>
- Through your Pay Pal account
- Scan this Quick Response (QR) code

These will connect 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 (STL is charged extra fees for debit and credit card transactions). **You can even set up recurring giving with many of these options!** IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, OR DESIRE ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE (586-772-3370).

“The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.” (Psalm 126:3)

O God, our loving Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, you are the giver of every good gift. Empower us to give generously of the time, talent, and treasure you have given us so that your kingdom may be spread throughout the world. This we ask through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen

Offertory

[LSB 343, vs. 1 & 4]

Prepare the royal highway; The King of kings is near!
Let ev’ry hill and valley A level road appear!
Then greet the King of Glory Foretold in sacred story: **Refrain**

Refrain: Hosanna to the Lord, For He fulfills God’s Word!

His is no earthly kingdom; It comes from heav’n above.
His rule is peace and freedom And justice, truth, and love.
So let your praise be sounding For kindness so abounding: **Refrain**

Text: © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship.

Confession and Absolution

L: If the Lord our God kept a record of sins, who could stand before him?

C: But with Him there is forgiveness, therefore He is feared.

L: God has gathered us together to hear His Word, call upon Him in prayer, and receive the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. In His presence we recognize our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot save ourselves. Together as God's people, let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and pray:

C: Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

(silence for reflection and self-examination)

L: Almighty God, merciful Father, in Holy Baptism You declared us to be Your children and gathered us into Your one, holy Church, in which You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen. Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

SENT TO THE MISSION FIELD

Scripture Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

L: Today's Scripture reading is from 1 Thessalonians 5.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil.

²³Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

L: This is the word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

We Profess our Faith

"The Apostles Creed"

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 thence 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

L: When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

C: Our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy.

L: He who goes out weeping shall come home with shouts of joy.

C: The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad.

L: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

C: 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

The Words of Institution

Private Prayer before Communing

God of love, through your Son you have commanded us to love one another. By the guidance of your Word and Spirit, deliver us from impenitence and teach us the truth that we might confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and be reconciled to one another; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Distribution of the Sacrament

The Canticle

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

[LSB 379, vs. 2 & 3]

Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes; Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! **Refrain**

**Refrain: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God
In the highest: **Refrain**

Distribution Hymn

"When All the World Was Cursed"

[LSB 346]

When all the world was cursed By Moses' condemnation,
Saint John the Baptist came With words of consolation.
With true forerunner's zeal The greater One he named,
And Him, as yet unknown, As Savior he proclaimed.

Before he yet was born, He leaped in joyful meeting,
Confessing Him as Lord Whose mother he was greeting.
By Jordan's rolling stream, A new Elijah bold,
He testified of Him Of whom the prophets told:

Behold the Lamb of God That bears the world's transgression,
Whose sacrifice removes The devil's dread oppression.
Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away our sin,
Who for our peace and joy Will full atonement win.

O grant, dear Lord of love, That we receive, rejoicing,
The word proclaimed by John, Our true repentance voicing,
That gladly we may walk Upon our Savior's way
Until we live with Him In His eternal day.

Text: © 1941 Concordia Publishing House.

Prayer as you go home

Almighty God, you have promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in your Son's name. Mercifully incline your ears to us who have now made our prayers and supplications to you, and grant that those things that we have faithfully asked according to your will we may receive to meet our need and bring glory to you; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*You are living in
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)

**Holiday Food Basket Giveaway – December 19th
10 a.m. – first come first serve – until gone**

**Clothing Closet Open – January 9th
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

Virtual Sunday School

Find information on THE FLOCK at www.STL-eastpointe.org.



Now enrolling at CrossBridge, St. Thomas Preschool! **Call Michele Jones for more information or an appointment to enroll; 586-260-6576.**

December is Filled with Opportunities

Please join us – and bring your friends and neighbors along.

Advent CHRISTMAS CAR-oling

Wednesday – December 16 - Noon and 7:00 pm
(7:00 also available online)

The evening gatherings will be in the front parking lot, where you can stand outside or stay in your car to sing and share the Christmas Joy.

Drive through Communion

Next Sunday, December 20 – 11:00 a.m. until Noon

A Safe and Healthy opportunity in our west (rear) parking lot.

Christmas Eve

“Carols, Candles, and Communion”

4:00 p.m. – Traditional Lessons and Carols (also available online)

11:00 p.m. – Traditional Lessons and Carols

Christmas Morning Communion @ 9:30 a.m.

“Includes a special message for the children”

Giving Tree - The “Giving Tree” will be different this year! Many have not returned to worshipping in the church and we have determined that it would be difficult to manage this program as we have done in the past. In an effort to keep you and your family safe, we are asking you to consider providing a financial gift to Wellspring Lutheran Foundation with their Christmas Caring program. Last year they made the important decision to transition their Christmas Caring program from a traditional gift giving program to gift cards.

There are a couple ways you can participate in their Christmas Caring this year:

1. Make a check payable to the Wellspring Lutheran Foundation, please designate on the check or envelope that the dollars are for Christmas Caring. Checks should be mailed to: Jill Haiser, Executive Director, Wellspring Lutheran Foundation, 4100 Pier North Blvd., Suite A, Flint, MI 48504.
2. Give a gift online. Visit their website at <https://wellspringlutheran.com/give-serve> and make a contribution.

NEXT SUNDAY - December 20, 2020

The 4th Sunday in Advent

Scripture Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 / Luke 1:26-38

Sermon Topic: “Promises Made – Promises Kept: Mary” - Text: Luke 1:30-33

Offering Envelopes



Mission Support 2021

This year you will be assigned the same envelope # for offering envelopes as you had in 2020. Your box of envelopes is in your mail slot/box. If you do not have a mail slot/box, you will find them in the west entrance of the church. (If you would like a mail slot/box, please contact the church office.) If you are unable to get to church to get your envelopes, you can still send in your contribution and it will be credited to your giving #. If you did not have envelopes in 2020 and would like some for 2021, please visit the table in the west entry way and sign up following the directions on the table.

Remember you can always donate electronically – go to www.stl-eastpointe.com for more information and options. (or see today's worship bulletin) If you have any questions, contact Linda, in the church office.

Office Hours - Monday – Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Friday 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Office will be closed from December 25th – January 4th

**Please be aware that the alarm will be set when office is closed,
and no activity is scheduled for the building!**

Call to arrange for time in the building!

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 (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).

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