



*December 31, 2023*

***Saint Thomas Lutheran***

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

[www.stl-eastpointe.org](http://www.stl-eastpointe.org)

*Rev. Jerry Corbett - Vacancy Pastor, Deacon - Don Cooley  
Specific Ministry Pastor - Rev. Richard A. VanBriggle*

*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.stl-eastpointe.org](http://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/staff member to give you a call.

*Our Confession of Faith  
First Sunday after Christmas /New Year's Eve  
Jesus---The Beginning and the End*

**+ Preparation +**

**Words of Welcome**

**Invocation and Call to Worship**

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

**C: Amen.**

**L:** Jesus said: "I am the Alpha and the Omega---the Beginning and the End." Let us end this year and begin another in the name of Him who is the source of all things.

**C: Let us go forward in the name of Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

**Entrance Hymn**

*"Of the Father's Love Begotten"*

LSB 384

Of the Father's love begotten Ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending He,  
Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see Evermore and evermore.

Oh, that birth forever blessèd, When the virgin, full of grace,  
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, Bore the Savior of our race,  
And the babe, the world's Redeemer, First revealed His sacred face Evermore and evermore.

This is He whom seers in old time Chanted of with one accord,  
Whom the voices of the prophets Promised in their faithful word.  
Now He shines, the long-expected; Let creation praise its Lord Evermore and evermore.

O ye heights of heav'n, adore Him; Angel hosts, His praises sing.  
Pow'rs, dominions, bow before Him And extol our God and King.  
Let no tongue on earth be silent, Ev'ry voice in concert ring Evermore and evermore.

Christ, to Thee, with God the Father, And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee  
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving And unending praises be,  
Honor, glory, and dominion, And eternal victory Evermore and evermore. Amen.

## **Confession and Absolution**

L: As we close out this year and prepare for the arrival of the next, let us first reflect on our sins and shortcomings of this past year and confess them to God, our Father: Merciful God, we confess that during this past year we have not been faithful to You or Your word. The times we have sinned against You and against one another are too numerous to count. We have not been the disciples You have called us to be.

**C: Have mercy on us and forgive us, O Lord.**

L: Forgive us for the poverty of our worship, our neglect of the means of grace, our hesitating witness for Christ, our evasion of responsibility in Your service, our imperfect stewardship of Your gifts.

**C: Have mercy on us and forgive us, O Lord.**

L: Forgive us that so little of Your love has reached others through us, that we have been thoughtless in our judgments, hasty in condemnation, grudging in forgiveness, slow to seek reconciliation, unwilling to love our sisters and brothers as we ought.

**C: Have mercy on us and forgive us, O Lord.**

L: Forgive us, we pray, and by Your Spirit give us the resolve to live the New Year, and every day of our lives, for You.

**C: Amen.**

L: Hear the Good News: God has commanded it and I have the privilege of announcing it to you – all of your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus Christ the past is forgiven and remembered no more. We are given a new opportunity to live new lives of love and service. Your sins are indeed forgiven---live in peace and joy!

**C: Amen.**

L: Now, let us also reflect on our many blessings of this past year.

*(A period of silence will be observed as we reflect on the year that is past.)*

L: Heavenly Father, God of all grace, govern our hearts that we may never forget your blessings but steadfastly thank and praise you for all your goodness in this life until, with all your saints, we praise you eternally in your heavenly kingdom.

**C: Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you.**

L: Lord Jesus Christ, we give thanks that you have blessed us with your presence in our lives this past year. We praise you for gifts of hope and healing, gifts of undeserved joys and blessings. Grant that we may continue to recognize your gracious presence in our lives at all times, and to acknowledge you as the fountain and source of all goodness and grace.

**C: Lord Jesus Christ, we praise and thank you.**

L: O Holy Spirit, we give you thanks for the year now ending, especially for the good we were permitted to give and to receive. The year is now ending, and we commit it to you. We entrust to you all the years that lie before us, for you are our help and counsel, and with you in our hearts we need never fear.

**C: O Holy Spirit, we praise and thank you.**

L: To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit be all the glory now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## **Hymn of Praise**

### *“Angels We Have Heard on High”*

LSB 368

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains. **Refrain**

**Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heav'nly song? **Refrain**

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King. **Refrain**

**Anthem**

*"Bring Us Peace"*

M. Frank/L. Spevacek

## + *The Service of the Word* +

### **Old Testament Reading**

**Isaiah 61:10-62:3**

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations. For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

*(after the reading)*

R: This is the word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **New Testament Reading**

**Galatians 4:4-7**

When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

*(after the reading)*

R: This is the word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **The Holy Gospel**

*(all rise)*

**Luke 2:22-40**

### **Gospel Procession**

*"From Heaven Above"*

LSB 358, vv. 8 & 13

Welcome to earth, O noble Guest, Through whom the sinful world is blest!  
You came to share my misery That You might share Your joy with me.

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,  
A quiet chamber set apart For You to dwell within my heart.

L: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, chapter 2.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

When the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, [Mary and Joseph] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had

been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

*(after the reading)*

L: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

### ***Gospel Procession***

*"From Heaven Above"*

LSB 358, vv. 14 & 15

My heart for very joy must leap; My lips no more can silence keep.  
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue That sweetest ancient cradlesong:

Glory to God in highest heav'n, Who unto us His Son has giv'n!  
While angels sing with pious mirth A glad new year to all the earth.

### ***Apostle's Creed***

LSB, inside back cover

### ***Announcements***

### ***Children's Sermon and Attendance Registration***

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



***We would like to know you attended service today!***

To record your attendance, you can scan this QR code with your phone's camera, it will take you to the web page/form for attendance. Fill out the form and hit the submit button.

### ***Hymn of the Day***

*"O God, Our Help in Ages Past"*

LSB 733

O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home:

Under the shadow of Thy throne Thy saints have dwelt secure;  
Sufficient is Thine arm alone, And our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood Or earth received her frame,  
From everlasting Thou art God, To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight Are like an evening gone,  
Short as the watch that ends the night Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream, Soon bears us all away;  
We fly forgotten as a dream Dies at the op'ning day.

O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,  
Be Thou our guard while troubles last And our eternal home!

**Sermon**

*"Depart in Peace"*

Luke 2:29

## *Our Response to God's Word*

### KINGDOM THOUGHTS

"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth." (Psalm 46:10)

*Lord Jesus, I thank you for your calming. Spirit of Jesus, comfort me.*



**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 1-586-800-2223
- Visit: [stl-eastpointe.org](http://stl-eastpointe.org) and click on "Mission Support"
- 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).

### ***Prayers of the Church***

**Ecclesiastes 3 and Romans 8**

**L:** There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die,

**C:** a time to plant and a time to uproot.

**L:** a time to kill and a time to heal,

**C:** a time to tear down and a time to build,

**L:** a time to weep and a time to laugh,

**C:** a time to mourn and a time to dance,

**L:** a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,

**C:** a time to embrace and a time to refrain,

L: a time to search and a time to give up,

**C: a time to keep and a time to throw away,**

L: a time to tear and a time to mend,

**C: a time to be silent and a time to speak,**

L: a time to love and a time to hate,

**C: a time for war and a time for peace.**

L: In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

**C: For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

L: For all the blessings of body and soul which we have enjoyed as a people in this span of time known as 2023,

**C: we give you thanks and praise, Oh Lord.**

L: And for all the blessings you will continue to grant to us and to generations to come in all future times,

**C: we give you thanks and praise your name forevermore. Amen**

## **Offertory**

*"O Come, All Ye Faithful"*

LSB 379, vv. 1, 2

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**

**Refrain: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,**

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

Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,

Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes; Son of the Father

Now in flesh appearing! **Refrain**

## **+ Service of Holy Communion+**

*"As we receive the True Body and Blood of our Lord, our faith is fed, our spirits are encouraged, and we are moved to share God's grace with the world."*

*[Because of the closeness of this sharing (and the concerns expressed in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29) we ask that those who have not been taught the faith at STL speak with a pastor or elder before communing.]*

## **Preface**

L: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

L: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

**C: Hosanna in the highest.**

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***

L: This peace of the Lord be with you always!

C: Amen.

### ***Entrance Hymn***

*“O Come, All Ye Faithful”*

LSB 379, vv. 3, 4

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

**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**

### ***The Distribution of the Sacrament***

*Alcohol-free wine is available in the center of each individual cup tray.  
Gluten-free host is available upon request from the host server.  
If you are coming for a blessing, please cross your arms across your chest.*

### ***Distribution Hymns***

*“Go Tell It on the Mountain”*

LSB 388

**Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!**

While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light. **Refrain**

The shepherds feared and trembled When lo, above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior's birth. **Refrain**

Down in a lonely manger The humble Christ was born;  
And God sent us salvation That blessèd Christmas morn. **Refrain**

*“It Came upon the Midnight Clear”*

LSB 366

It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth To touch their harps of gold:  
“Peace on the earth, goodwill to all, From heav'n's all-gracious king.”  
The world in solemn stillness lay To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come With peaceful wings unfurled,  
And still their heav'nly music floats O'er all the weary world.  
Above its sad and lowly plains They bend on hov'ring wing,  
And ever o'er its babel sounds The blessed angels sing.

All you, beneath your heavy load, By care and guilt bent low,  
Who toil along a dreary way With painful steps and slow:  
Look up, for golden is the hour, Come swiftly on the wing,  
The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the angels sing.

For lo, the days have come to pass By prophets seen of old,  
When down into the circling years Came Christ as was foretold.  
His word of peace shall to the earth God's ancient promise bring,  
And all who take this gift will hear The song the angels sing.

**Post Communion Canticle**     *“Let All Together Praise Our God”*

LSB 389, vv. 1, 7

Let all together praise our God Before His glorious throne;  
Today He opens heav'n again To give us His own Son,  
To give us His own Son.

Your grace in lowliness revealed, Lord Jesus, we adore  
And praise to God the Father yield And Spirit evermore;  
We praise You evermore.

Text: © 1969 Concordia Publishing House.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

L: Send us forth, O Lord, into the New Year that is ahead, refreshed by Your love, redeemed by Your grace, and renewed by Your forgiveness, that we show forth Your glory in all the world; through Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

**Closing Hymn**

*“Let Us All with Gladsome Voice”*

LSB 390

*(The congregation moves into the chancel)*

Let us all with gladsome voice Praise the God of heaven,  
Who, to bid our hearts rejoice, His own Son hath given.

To this vale of tears He comes, Here to serve in sadness,  
That with Him in heav'n's fair homes We may reign in gladness.

We are rich, for He was poor; Is not this a wonder?  
Therefore praise God evermore Here on earth and yonder.

Christ, our Lord and Savior dear, Be Thou ever near us.  
Grant us now a glad new year. Amen, Jesus, hear us.

**Anthem**

*“Old Irish Blessing”*

D. Agay

**Announcements**

## ***Blessing***

L: A blessed and happy new year to all.

C: **And for you as well.**

L: Go forth in joy, as the strong and bold body of Christ

C: **We will serve the Lord with joy in all the years to come.**

L: The peace of the Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

*(Please share these greetings with one another)*

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Watch services on Facebook or at [www.stl-eastpointe.org](http://www.stl-eastpointe.org) – videotaping in progress during service

## **NEXT SUNDAY**

### ***Epiphany***

January 7, 2023

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6 / Ephesians 3:1-12 / Matthew 2:1-12

## ***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).

*Weekly Worship with Communion - Sunday at 9:30 a.m.*

*Monday at 7:30 p.m.*

*"The Flock" for children and Crossfraining JC Style for youth*

*Faith Hope Love Gatherings - Sunday and throughout the week*

## PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

December 31, 2023

### **Our Primary Prayer focus for this week is on Christ's work through his Word:**

- All new believers and the newly baptized members of Christ's kingdom.
- Healing all who are stymied by fear, shame, pain, or grief.
- Greater diligence in reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting God's Word.
- To guide us in publicly expressing our thanks to Jesus in words, deeds, and giving.

**And we remember those at both ends of life on this earth**, the unborn and newly born, the elderly and those nearing life's end, remembering especially all pregnant mothers.



To connect to the **STL PRAYER CHAIN**, contact Karen Dolan ([mdolan421@gmail.com](mailto:mdolan421@gmail.com)), text "Prayer" to 1-586-800-2223, or scan this QR code, with your phone's camera, to be taken to the prayer request form.

### † In Our Thoughts and Prayers †

✠**God's Healing Hand on:** John Hupp, Caroline Henze, Brenda Finger, Ben Stubenrauch, Harrison Ahee, Beth White (niece of Jan Adams), Wilhelm Wolf (cousin of Vera LaFrate), Joe Habrowski (Sue Wensink's cousin), Thomas Patch (Sandra's husband), Jane Hinkins (friend of Alicia Anno), John Belvedere (son-in-law of Caroline Henze).

✠**Continued prayers for Healing & Strength for:** Mary Buike, Gianino, Joanne Awe, Robert Laroche (family of Jan Adams), Jan Adams, Tiffany Crow (granddaughter of Marilyn Redmond), Claire Armstrong (granddaughter of Clyde & Carolyn Armstrong), Payton Gifford (great-granddaughter of Jane Gurnack), Kennedy Pank (great-granddaughter of Marilyn Redmond), Adriana Sullivan (friend of Sue Wensink).