



*December 22, 2024*

***Saint Thomas Lutheran***

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

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

*Senior Pastor - Rev. Dietrick Gladden – 248-719-2766*

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

# *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.

### *4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent*

### *Divine Service*

**Prelude**

*“Long Ago, Prophets Knew”*

L. Larson/F. Green

***The Lighting of the Advent Wreath***

***Announcements and Attendance/Communion Registration***



***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.

**Opening Hymn**

*“Gloria”*

WOV 640

Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia! (3x’s)

Text: Traditional, Music: Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994  
© 1979, 1988 Les Presses de Taize, admin. GIA Publications, Inc.

***Opening Liturgy***

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

***Prayer of the Day***

L: Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Protect us by your strength,  
C: **And save us from the threatening dangers of our sins.**  
L: Grant us the gift of Your divine peace and pardon,  
C: **And bless Your Church, here and scattered throughout the world, as we proclaim the Gospel and call all nations to faith.**

***Proclamation of the Good News***

L: God has heard our cry. Immanuel is come. He has defeated our enemies, atoned for our sins, and authorized me to proclaim this good news to you: Your sins are forgiven, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

### ***Sharing of the Peace***

L: The peace of the Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

*(share the peace with one another)*

***Anthem***

*“Joy Has Dawned”  
with “Angels we Have Heard on High”*

K. Getty/S. Townend/L. Larson

## ***The Service of the Word***

### ***Old Testament Reading***

**Micah 5:2-5a**

But 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 origin is from of old, from ancient days. 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. 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. And he shall be their peace.

*(after the reading)*

R: This is the word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

### ***New Testament Reading***

**1 John 4:9-11**

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

*(after the reading)*

R: This is the word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

### ***The Holy Gospel***

*(all rise)*

**Luke 1:39-45**

C: (sung) **Savior of the nations come, Virgin's Son, make here Your home!  
By Your mighty pow'r make whole All our ills of flesh and soul.**

LSB 332, v. 1

L: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 1.

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

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

*(after the reading)*

L: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

**C: (sung)**

**Glory to the Father sing, Glory to the Son, our King,  
Glory to the Spirit be Now and through eternity.**

LSB 332, v. 8

### ***The Nicene Creed***

LSB inside back cover

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen**

### ***Children's Sermon***

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

*"Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly"*

WOV 634  
(tune LSB 932)

Sing of Mary, pure and lowly, virgin mother wise and mild.  
Sing of God's own son most holy, who became her little child.  
Fairest child of fairest mother, God the Lord who came to earth,  
Word made flesh, our very brother, takes our nature by his birth.

Sing of Jesus, son of Mary, in the home at Nazareth.  
Toil and labor cannot weary love enduring unto death.  
Constant was the love he gave her, though he went forth from her side,  
Forth to preach and heal, and suffer, till on Calvary he died.

Glory be to God the Father; glory be to God the Son;  
Glory be to God the Spirit; glory to the Three in One.  
From the heart of blessed Mary, from all saints the song ascends,  
And the Church the stain re-echoes unto earth's remotest ends.

Text: Roland F. Palmer, 1891-1985, Music: Skinner Chavez-Melo, 1944-1992  
Music © 1985 Estate of Skinner Chavez-Melo

### ***Sermon***

*"God's Love Is Our Greatest Gift"*

**1 John 4:9-11**

# ***Our Response to God's Word***

## ***Prayer of the Church***

L: O Lord, there is none like You in holiness, constancy and might; yet, You exercise Your power for the salvation of sinners. As we draw near to the celebration of Jesus' birth, fill our hearts with gratitude that Your Son humbled Himself and became flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior.

*(after each petition)*

L: Lord in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: Lord God, heavenly Father, we give You thanks for Your Son, Jesus Christ, who is truly the King of the nations and their desire. He who formed us of clay took on our human nature that He might save us. He came to His own and was rejected by them, yet You established Him as the true cornerstone, tested and precious, that whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame. Grant that, as we recall with thanksgiving His advent in the flesh, we may always confess Him and remain watchful for His advent in glory at the Last Day; for You live and reign, ever one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## ***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: We are gathered in His presence to hear His Word, call upon Him in prayer, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us, therefore, first consider 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.**

# ***The Service of the Sacrament***

*"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.]*

## ***Preparation for the Sacrament***

L: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

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

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

L: Assembled with angels and archangels and the whole company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

C: **Thanks be to God**

## ***The Lord's Prayer***

LSB back cover

**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**

## ***Words of Institution***

L: This Peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **Amen.**

## ***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.*

## ***Entrance Hymn***

### ***"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"***

LSB 341, vv. 1, 2

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates! Behold, the King of glory waits.  
The King of kings is drawing near; The Savior of the world is here.  
Life and salvation He doth bring; Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.  
To God the Father raise Your joyful songs of praise.

A righteous Helper comes to thee; His chariot is humility,  
His kingly crown is holiness, His scepter, pity in distress.  
The end of all our woe He brings; Therefore the earth is glad and sings.  
To Christ the Savior raise Your grateful hymns of praise.

## ***Distribution -Continuous Line***

*You will be ushered out the side isles to come forward for*

*Communion and you will come back up the middle.*

*Please follow the directions of the usher.*

## ***Hymns during Distribution***

### ***"One Small Child"***

CH 280

One small Child in a land of a thousand, One small dream of a Savior tonight,  
One small hand reaching out to the starlight, One small city of life. O!

One king bringing his gold and his riches, One King ruling an army of might,  
One king kneeling with incense and candlelight, One King bringing us life. O!

See Him lying, a cradle beneath Him; See Him smiling in the stall.  
See His mother praising His Father; See His tiny eyelids fall.

One small light from the flame of a candle, One small light from a city of might,  
One small light from the stars in the endless night, One small light from a face. O!

See the shepherds kneeling before Him; See the kings on bended knee.  
See His mother praising His Father; See the Blessed Infant sleep.

One small Child in a land of a thousand, One small dream in a people of might,  
One small hand reaching out to the starlight, One small Savior of Life. O!

Text and Music by David Meece  
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*“O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”*

LSB 334, vs. 1, 4, 6  
(tune 442)

O Lord, how shall I meet You, How welcome You aright?  
Your people long to greet You, My hope, my heart’s delight!  
O kindle, Lord most holy, Your lamp within my breast  
To do in spirit lowly All that may please You best.

Love caused Your incarnation; Love brought You down to me.  
Your thirst for my salvation Procured my liberty.  
Oh, love beyond all telling, That led You to embrace  
In love, all love excelling, Our lost and fallen race.

He comes to judge the nations, A terror to His foes,  
A light of consolations And blessèd hope to those  
Who love the Lord’s appearing. O glorious Sun, now come,  
Send forth Your beams so cheering, And guide us safely home.

***Post-Communion Canticle***

*“Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”*

LSB 341, vv. 5

Redeemer, come and open wide My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide!  
O enter with Thy grace divine; Thy face of mercy on me shine.  
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on Until our glorious goal is won.  
Eternal praise and fame We offer to Thy name.

***Dismissal***

***Post-Communion Collect and Benediction***

***Sending Greeting***

L: Go in peace and serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heav'n.  
No ear may hear His coming; But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him, still The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

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



**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: <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).

**On Christmas Eve** at 4pm we will be presenting The Living Crèche, a joyous musical celebration that weaves scripture, ancient Legend, and carols from around the world into a Christmas pageant. **Communion, candles, handbells and instrumentalists will add to this beautiful Christmas Eve service. All children in attendance will receive a special gift, compliments of the Kapelle. Plan now to attend!**

**Patrons** are needed to help defray the cost of the professional musicians we hire to accompany the Kapelle and enhance our Christmas Eve service. Please place your donation in an envelope marked "Patron for Kapelle" and place it in the offering plate, offering box, bring it to the church office or give electronically. Thank you for being so supportive of the music ministry.





**2025 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 printed in the worship folders. If you have any questions, contact Linda in the church office. **Please, do not use these envelopes until 2025!**

## **October through December Mission Envelopes**

### **CAMP RESTORE - DETROIT**

**(Housed in Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church)**

## **Upcoming Worship and Events**

December 24 - Christmas Eve Celebration at 4 pm

December 25 - Christmas Day at 10 am

December 31 –NYE service at 7 pm

January 11 – Un-decorate the church at 9am

### **Help is needed!**

(for more information on any of these events, please call the church office)

**Office will be closed from December 24<sup>th</sup> – January 3<sup>rd</sup>**

## ***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 Crossftraining JC Style for youth*

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

## PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

*Your personal prayer guide for the week of:*

**December 22, 2024**

### **Our Primary Prayer focus for this week is upon Christ's people on earth:**

- For the Holy Spirit to be drawing people to our worship Gatherings – especially Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.
- Grant wisdom to our leaders and peace among the nations, that we may dwell secure. For children to be raised in the nurture and encouragement of the Gospel.
- For us all to grow in generosity, faith, and sacrificial giving.
- For those who worship with us this coming week to return in the New Year.

**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](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 †**

Give them the knowledge of Christ, their Emmanuel, who is with them in their trials.

Grant them health and healing in accord with Your perfect will.

✠**God's Healing Hand on:** Janice Engel, John Cherry, Russ Semenjuk, Larry Cichocki, Roy Leidich, Robert Miller (Heather's father), Tim Setter (nephew of Caroline Henze), Julie Tyner (friend of Caroline Henze), Doug Klawender (son of Shirley), Emily Henze (daughter-in-law of Caroline), Beverly (friend of Connie Sommers), Allison Bottke (friend of Bucholtz's).

✠**Continued prayers for Healing & Strength for:** Debbie Closurdo, Janet Semenjuk, Joanne Awe, Brenda Finger, Harrison Ahee, Andrew Brejnak, 19, (grandson of Gerry & Nola Klonowski, son of their daughter, Lisa), Robert Laroche (family of Jan Adams), Jan Adams, Claire Armstrong (granddaughter of Clyde & Carolyn Armstrong), Kennedy Pank (great-granddaughter of Marilyn Redmond), Sally Burk (sister of Lois Revard), Tamara Sommer (Connie's daughter-in-law).