

St. Stephen Lutheran Church of the East Bay & Central Valley

(A Congregation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession)

www.ststephenclc.org

**Worshiping Every Sunday in the East Bay at 9 a.m. at
Grace Lutheran Church
1836 B St., Hayward, CA 94541-3140**

Worshiping in the Central Valley at 2 p.m. - 1st & 3rd Sundays of
the Month

Atria Senior Living - Bayside Landing - 1st Floor Activity Room
3318 Brookside Rd., Stockton, CA 95219

Pastor: Steven Karp

21290 Birch St. - Hayward, CA 94541-1538

Phone: (510) 581-6637; e-mail: se-karp@sbcglobal.net

Organist: Elizabeth Karp

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The Third Sunday of Advent – 13 December 2015

Liturgy — Page 5 in The Lutheran Hymnal

HYMNS: 68 The Advent Of Our King
74 Once He Came In Blessing
58 O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee (1 & 5-7; 1st tune)

Sermon Text: Matthew 11,2-10

Sermon Theme: Should We Wait For Another

1. Unmet Expectations

2. The Perfect Gift

3. There Is No Other

INTROIT: Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men: the Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing: but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. Lord, You have been favorable unto Your land: You have brought back the captivity of Jacob. **Glory be to the Father ...**

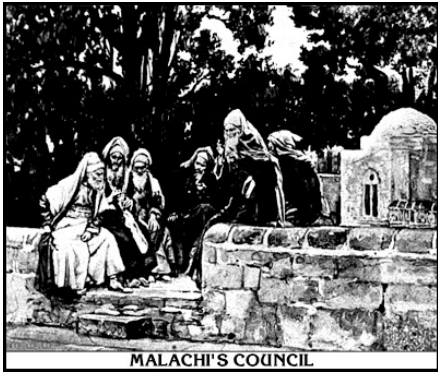
COLLECT: Lord God, heavenly Father, You gave Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to become Man and to come into the world that He might destroy the works of the devil, deliver us poor offenders from sin and death, and give us everlasting life: We beseech You so to rule and govern our hearts by Your Holy Spirit that we may seek no other refuge than His Word, and thus avoid the sin to which we are by nature inclined, in order that we may always be found among the faithful followers of Your Son, Jesus Christ, and that by faith in Him obtain eternal salvation; through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever the One true God, world without end. **Amen.**

Old Testament

Malachi 3,1-6

“Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the LORD, Whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of Hosts. ² “But who can endure the Day of His Coming? And who can stand when He

appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.³ He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and



silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness.⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

⁵ “Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me,” says the LORD of Hosts.⁶ “For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.”

Epistle

1 Corinthians 4,1-5

Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and as stewards of the mysteries of God.² In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.³ But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself.⁴ I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the One Who examines me is the Lord.⁵ Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes Who will both bring to light the things that are

hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

GRADUAL

Rejoice in the Lord always,

And again I will say, rejoice!

O LORD, You showed Your favor to Your land;

You restored the captivity of Jacob.

You forgave the iniquity of Your people;

You covered all their sin.

Restore us, O God of our salvation,

And cause Your indignation toward us to cease.

Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,

That glory may dwell in our land.

Truth springs from the earth;

And righteousness looks down from heaven.

Hallelujah! Remember, O Lord, Your tender mercies,

For they have been ever of old. [sing: triple Hallelujah]

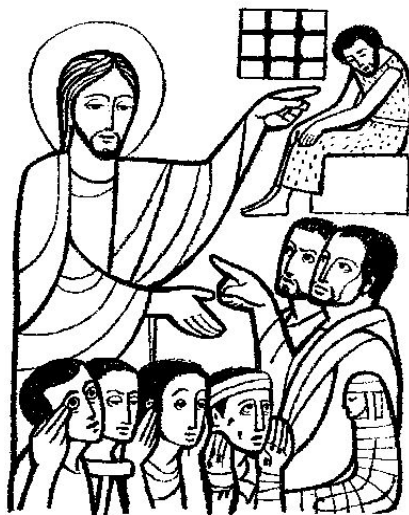
The Holy Gospel

Matthew 11,2-11

Response: Glory be to Thee, O Lord!

Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent *word* by his disciples³ and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or shall we look for someone else?”⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you hear and see:⁵ *the* blind receive sight and *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised up, and *the* poor have the Gospel preached to them.⁶ And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.”

⁷ As these men were going *away*, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft *clothing*? Those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings’ palaces! ⁹ But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it



is written,

‘Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You,
Who will prepare Your way before You.’”

¹¹ Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.”

[Scripture passages are from the *New American Standard Bible*, © The Lockman Foundation, used by permission]

Response: Praise be to Thee, O Christ!

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Lessons for 20 December — The Fourth Sunday of Advent

– A Service with Holy Communion

Old Testament: Isaiah 40,1–5

Epistle: Philippians 4,4–7

The Holy Gospel: John 1,19–28

Weekly Scripture Verse: Clear the way for the LORD ... Behold, the Lord God will come with might. (Isaiah 40,3.10)

Today’s Gradual is based on selected verses from Philippians 4 and Psalm 85.

Next Service in Stockton: Sunday, 20 December, at 2 p.m.

Bible Study –Stockton – Tuesday, 15 December, at 1 p.m.
note time change since no one wishes to drive home after sunset.

Communion. Since Pr. Karp was in hospital last week, we shall celebrate Holy Communion in Hayward on Sunday, 20 December.

ILL. In your prayers, please remember Nancy, Roy and his brother, Gerald; Jean Niblett; Marlene Clappier; Don



Luebkehan, Don’s nephew Leigh, and Rose, one of Don’s care givers; Sue (the Karps’ neighbor who is undergoing chemotherapy), Sue (Carolyn’s friend), Don Drews; Richard Hocker; Ruth Scheuermann;

James Sandeen; the Breeden twins, Chloe and Dagny; Pr. Doug Priestap (Calgary); Pr. Robert List (Spokane); Pr. Karp.

Pr. Karp’s Medical Condition. Last Saturday, Pr. Karp got up to take Bear for a walk, and his left leg collapsed and he was unable to walk. Elizabeth called 911 and EMS personnel transported Pr. Karp by ambulance to Eden Hospital. He was admitted and was diagnosed with Transient Cerebral Ischemia; in addition to this, further tests revealed that he has

Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Without Complications and a brain tumor. The brain tumor is on the right side at the base of the brain and partially encloses the carotid artery. On Monday, He will be seeing his family physician regarding the diabetes and other issues. He is in the process of contacting a neurosurgeon to deal with the brain tumor. He thanks all who have been and are keeping him in their prayers.

Call News. The Rev. Michael Gurath, pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran, Phoenix, AZ, has returned the Call to Gethsemane Lutheran, Spokane Valley, WA. The Rev. Walter Schaller, pastor of Mount Zion Lutheran, Madison Heights MI, has announced his intent to retire from the public ministry but plans to serve the congregation until the Spirit provides a new shepherd. The congregation has called the Rev. Mark Weis, pastor of Church of the Lutheran Confession, North Port FL. The Commissioning of CLC Foreign Missionary Peter Evensen will take place at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, 18 December, at Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, WI.

Note: Committee Chairmen should submit their annual reports for 2015 to Timothy Blank no later than the first of the year.

Handouts: President Eichstadt's December 2015 Pastoral Letter.

Candidates for Immanuel Professor Call: The Board of Regents for Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary invites "all pastors, professors, male teachers, and voting members of member congregations of the Church of

the Lutheran Confession" (CLC Constitution) to nominate an individual or individuals to fill the vacancy which will be created on the Immanuel faculty by the retirement of Professor John Pfeiffer at the end of the 2015–16 academic year. The individual would teach at the high school (potentially), college, and seminary levels with an emphasis on courses in Hebrew (college) and Old Testament theology (seminary) and also in other theological disciplines. With the duties including teaching God's Word to adult males, the person is to be a male (1 Tim. 2:12). The position would, God-willing, commence with the 2016–17 academic year. Those submitting nominations are encouraged to include information regarding their nominee's educational background and teaching and/or professional experience, also indicating how the person might help our school in supervising extracurricular activities or serving in administrative positions. Please send your nominations postmarked or e-mailed no later than January 20, 2016, to: Mr. Craig Ryan, Secretary; ILC Board of Regents; 499 Country Lane; Fulda, MN 56131 (email: cryan@page1printers.com).

ILC Tour Choir CDs. A newly produced recording of choral music, sung by Tour Choirs of Immanuel Lutheran College, is scheduled to be available the week of December 14. It is a 2-CD set, featuring pieces sung by various choirs from 1991 to 2015. The first CD primarily reflects the themes of Advent and Christmas, the second the themes of Lent and Easter. The cost per 2-CD set is \$16 (or two sets for \$30). The sets will be available through the ILC Bookhouse or at the Christmas concert (December 18 at Messiah, Eau Claire). Congregations may request to receive the CDs on consignment through the

Bookhouse (clcbookhouse@ilc.edu).

Prayers for India – Massive flooding along the coastal regions of south–east India has caused the death of several hundred people and nearly 2 million have lost their homes. Many of our brothers and sisters in Christ of the BELC are among those who have lost homes, businesses, crops, food, and church buildings. Because of the lower than usual balance in the Mission Development Fund (MDF) the CLC Board of Missions has only been able to provide minimal financial assistance at this time. Please pray for the Lord’s continued protection and provision for those who are suffering in India. And pray that He provides wisdom and resources to those who are working to assist the many who are in need.

Advent Meditations. The Advent meditations – Higher Things: Reflections – reflect last year’s dates. The meditations for each day are good; the meditation for 13 December reflects the “Saturday of the Second Week of Advent.” I apologize for downloading last year’s devotional booklet instead of this year’s.

St. Lucy, Martyr (203 – 13 December 304). According to tradition, she was born to a noble Greek family in Syracuse, Sicily, where she also died. Her mother was a Christian. Lucy made a vow of virginity and distributed her wealth to the poor. This generosity disturbed the person to whom she had been betrothed, and he denounced her to the governor of Sicily, Paschasius. This was during the Diocletian persecutions and she was sentenced to be burned at the stake; however,

since the fire would not take, she was put to death by the sword, which pierced her throat. She soon became the object

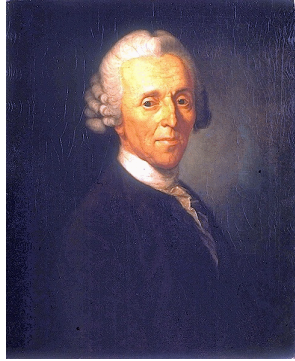


of great veneration. In the Scandinavian Church 13 December is St. Lucy Day, and it is celebrated when a young girl is elected to portray Lucy; she wears a white gown with a red sash and a crown of candles on her head; she leads a procession of girls, each holding a candle. Her name derives from the Latin word, lux, meaning light. Many feel that her feast day was chosen because it is close to the shortest day of the year.

She is often portrayed bearing a lamp. In southern Europe, she is supposed to bring sweets to children who have been good and lumps of coal to those who misbehaved. In Scandinavia, children who misbehaved should be especially careful since it was told that Lucy could come down the chimney and take them away. [Source: in part from The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church]

Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, Lutheran Pastor and Hymn Writer (4 July 1715 – 13 December 1769). Gellert was the son of a Lutheran pastor and was born in Hainichen in the Saxon Harz. He graduated in theological studies from the University of Leipzig and became an assistant to his father. Soon, however, he had to step down because he had a poor memory and the use of a manuscripts in the pulpit was not tolerated in the Lutheran Church of his day. In 1739, he became the tutor to the sons of the von Lüttichau family. Two years later, he returned to the University of Leipzig and there looked after

the studies of his nephew and also studied for a M.A., which he received in 1744 from the faculty of Belles Letters. In 1745



he became a lecturer in philosophy and was quite popular with his students, among whom were Goethe and Lessing. Gellert's Fables, published in two volumes in 1746 and 1748, were spirited and humorous, and won him fame and universal recognition as a German classicist. In 1751 he was appointed extraordinary professor of

philosophy and lectured poetry, rhetoric, and moral philosophy. He had a delicate constitution and was a hypochondriac; and it seems that the last ten years of his life were marked by increasing bouts of ill-health. He died in Leipzig. In 1757 he published Gesitliche Oden und Lieder (Spiritual Songs and Lyrics). Later, such composers as C. P. Bach, Hayden, and Beethoven set them to music. His hymn, "Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won" is number 201 in The Lutheran Hymnal. Other hymns of his in modern German hymnals are: "Dies ist der tag, den Gott gemacht" ("This is the Day Which the Lord has made'), "Herr, stärke mich, dein Leiden zu bedenken" (Lord, Strengthen Me to Remember Your Passion"), "Jesus lebt, mit ihm auch ich" ("Jesus Live, And I With Him"), "Mein erst Gefühl sei Preis und Dank" ("Let My First Feelings Be of Praise and Thanks"). [Source: mostly from Pollack, ed., The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal].

Christmas Worship Schedule

Christmas Eve Carol Service on **24 December** at 12:30 p.m. in **Stockton**.

Children's Christmas Eve Service at **Mountain View**, 24 December, at 5 p.m.

Christmas Day Carol Service on **25 December** at 9 a.m. in **Hayward**.

