

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

(A Congregation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession)
www.ststephenclc.org

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

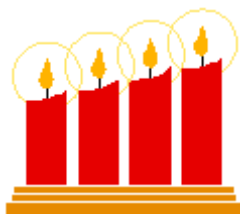
Worshipping in the Central Valley at 2 p.m. - 1st & 3rd Sundays of
the Month
Atria Senior Living - Bayside Landing - 1st Floor Activity Room
3318 Brookside Rd., Stockton, CA 95219

Pastor: Steven Karp

21290 Birch St. - Hayward, CA 94541-1538
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Organist: Elizabeth Karp

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The Fourth Sunday In Advent - 18 December 2016 –

Liturgy — Page 5 in The Lutheran Hymnal

HYMNS: 62 Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel
61 Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People
55 Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come

Sermon Text: Isaiah 40,1-8

Sermon Theme: “Comfort” – A Word Spoken From God’s
Heart

1. The Need For Comfort
2. True Comfort
3. Comfort That Lasts

INTROIT: Drop down, you heavens, from above: and let the
skies pour down righteousness. Let the earth open: and bring
forth salvation. The heavens declare the glory of God: and the
firmament shows His handiwork. **Glory be to the Father ...**

COLLECT: Lord God, heavenly Father, it is good and right that
we should give thanks to You, that You have given us a
glorious Baptism like that of John the Baptist, and that therein
You have promised us the forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit,
and everlasting life through Your Son, Jesus Christ: We
beseech You, by Your grace and mercy preserve us in such
faith, that we never doubt Your promise, but be comforted by
our Baptism in all temptations; and grant us Your Holy Spirit
that we may renounce sin, and ever continue in the
righteousness bestowed on us in Baptism, until by Your
grace, we obtain our eternal salvation; through Your beloved
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

Isaiah 40,1-8

“Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God.

- 2 “Speak kindly to Jerusalem;
And call out to her, that her warfare has ended,
That her iniquity has been removed,
That she has received of the LORD’s hand

Double for all her sins.”

³ A Voice is calling,
“Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness;
Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.
⁴ Let every valley be lifted up,
And every mountain and hill be made low;
And let the rough ground become a plain,
And the rugged terrain a broad valley;
⁵ Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
And all flesh will see it together;
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”
⁶ A voice says, “Call out.”
Then He answered, “What shall I call out?”
All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the
flower of the field.
⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades,
When the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
Surely the people are grass.
⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the Word of our God stands forever.

Epistle Philippians 4,4–9

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵
Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.
⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and
supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made
known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all
comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in
Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is
honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is
lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence

and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these
things. ⁹ The things you have learned and received and heard
and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace
will be with you.

GRADUAL

For the LORD has built up Zion;
He has appeared in His glory.
You will arise and have compassion on Zion;
**For it is time to be gracious to her, for the appointed
time has come.**
For He looked down from His holy height;
From heaven the LORD gazed upon the earth,
To hear the groaning of the prisoner;
To set free those who were doomed to death;
That men may tell of the name of the LORD in Zion,
And His praise in Jerusalem.
Hallelujah! Remember, O Lord, Your tender mercies,
For they have been ever of old. [sing: triple Hallelujah!]

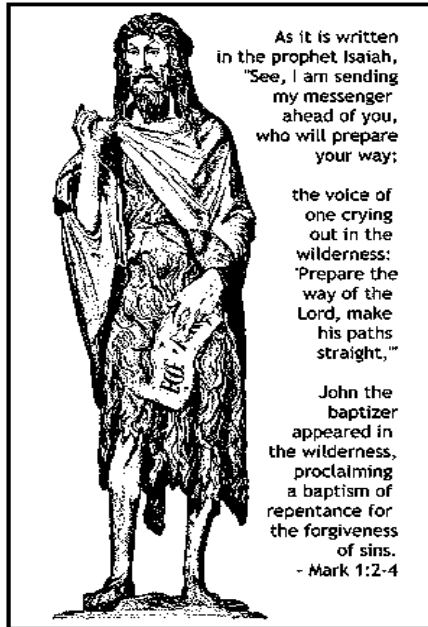
The Holy Gospel John 1,6–8 & 19–28

Response: **Glory be to Thee, O Lord!**

There came a man, sent from God, whose name was
John. ⁷ He came for a witness, that He might bear witness of
the Light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the
Light, but came that he might bear witness of the Light.

¹⁹ And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent
to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who
are you?” ²⁰ And he confessed, and did not deny, and he
confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ²¹ And they asked him,
“What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are
you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” ²² They said to

him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?”²³ He said, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight



As it is written
in the prophet Isaiah,
“See, I am sending
my messenger
ahead of you,
who will prepare
your way;

the voice of
one crying
out in the
wilderness:
“Prepare the
way of the
Lord, make
his paths
straight.”

John the
baptizer
appeared in
the wilderness,
proclaiming
a baptism of
repentance for
the forgiveness
of sins.
- Mark 1:2-4

the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”²⁴ Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.²⁵ And they asked him, and said to him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”²⁶ John answered them saying, “I baptize in water, but among you stands One Whom you do not know.²⁷ It is He Who comes after me, the thong of Whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”²⁸ These things took

place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. [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 25 December – The Feast Of The Nativity Of Our Lord

Old Testament: Isaiah 7,10-14
Epistle: Isaiah 9,2-7
The Holy Gospel: Luke 2,1-14

Weekly Scripture Verse: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! The Lord is near. (Philippians 4,4-5)

Today’s **Gradual** is based on selected verses from Psalm 102.

Next Service in STOCKTON: Today at 2 p.m.

Christmas Worship Schedule

Christmas Eve Carol Service on **24 December** at 1 p.m. in **Stockton.**

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

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

Bible Study - Hayward - Tuesday, 20 December, 1:30 p.m.
Stockton - Tuesday, 27 December, 1 p.m.

ILL. In your prayers, please remember Nancy and Roy Cameron; Jean Niblett; Marlene Clappier; Sue (the Karp’s neighbor who is undergoing chemotherapy), Don Drews; Richard and Beth Hocker; Ruth Scheuermann; Pr. Doug Priestap (Florida); Pr. Steven Karp; Mary Ryan (of Eau Claire, WI); Deena; Peter.



Call News — The Rev. Michael Wilke, pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran, Saginaw, MI, has returned the Call to Zion Lutheran, Lawrenceville, GA. Faith Lutheran, Manchester MO, is requesting a candidate from the seminary graduating class. The Rev. Timothy Wheaton, pastor of Living Word Lutheran, Blue Springs (Kansas City area), MO, has returned the Call from Rock of Ages Lutheran, Grand Rapids, MI. Professor Douglas Libby of Immanuel Lutheran, Mankato, has accepted the Call to serve Living Savior Lutheran, Eden Prairie, MN, on an

expanded basis for one year. He will be installed in a special service at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 1. The Rev. Matthew Ude will be installed in a special service at Faith Lutheran in Markesan, WI, at 3 pm. on Sunday, January 8.

The O Antiphons. These seven antiphons were used in the



early Church for the seven days preceding Christmas. They were already in use by the eighth century but date to an earlier period. They refer to the Old



Testament names for Jesus. Four of these antiphons are in the first lines of the hymn, “Oh Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel.” thus, “O, Emmanuel” is an antiphon. The antiphon in the second stanza of the hymn is “O, Rod of Jesse”



(which is also given as “O, Root of Jesse”). The antiphon in the third stanza is “O Dayspring from on high,” which refers to Luke 1,78, in



which Zacharias, the father of the John the Baptist, refers to the coming Messiah as the “Dayspring from on high.” The antiphon on the fourth stanza is “O Key of David,” which is based on Revelation 3,7 and Isaiah 22,15-24, in which Jesus Himself holds this key, which means that He is the only one who can open the door to God’s Kingdom of Grace and life eternal.

Offering Envelopes for 2017 are now available.

Katharina von Bora Luther (29 January 1499 - 20 December 1552). Katherina von Bora was born to minor and probably impoverished Saxon nobility in Lippendorf; her father was Hans the Younger von Bora and her mother Anna von Bora, neé von

Haugwitz. Her mother died when she was five. In 1508, her father placed her in the Cistercian convent at Nimbschen, where a maternal aunt was the Mother Superior. In 1515, she took her vows as a nun. While there, she learned to read and write and also learned Latin.

With the coming of the Reformation, Katharina and other nuns became interested in reform and contacted Luther and asked for his assistance. Luther sent Leonhard Köppe, a town councilor and merchant of Torgau, and on Easter Eve 1523, after delivering barrels of herring to the convent, he smuggled the nuns out. They arrived in Wittenberg and within two years Luther was able to arrange marriages for all of the nuns except Katharina, who insisted that she would only marry Luther or Nikolaus von Amsdorf. On 13 June 1525 Martin

Luther and Katharina von Bora married; witnesses included Justus Jonas, Johannes Bugenhagen, and Barbara and Lucas Cranach. John Frederick, the Elector of Saxony, gave them the “Black Cloister,” the former Augustinian monastery in Wittenberg as a wedding present. When they married, Katharina was 26 years old and Luther was 42.



Lucas Cranach's portrait of Katharina von Bora Luther - 1526

Katharina immediately took over running the household, administering and managing the holdings of the monastery, breeding and selling cattle, buying and selling land, and so forth. Luther called her “Katie, my Rib,” and “the Morning Star of Wittenberg” because of her habit of rising at 4 a.m. to discharge all of her responsibilities. In part, she had to be an effective manager because Luther was always taking in students and friends and money was always tight. When they were married, Albert, the Archbishop of Mainz

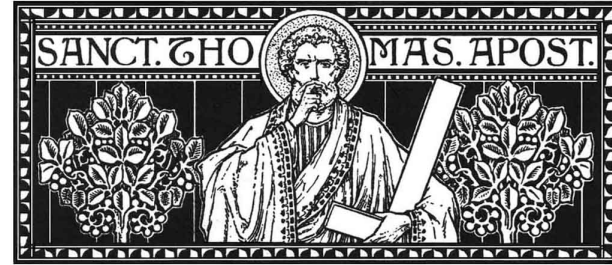
and the person who had been responsible for Tetzl selling indulgences, sent them 2 (or 20) gold gulden as a wedding present; which was a very generous gift. Luther told Katie to return the money; she didn't.

In addition to managing the household, she also bore Luther six children: Johannes (Hans) (1526-75); Elizabeth (1527-28); Magalena (1529-42; Martin Jr. (1531-65), Paul (1533-93); and, Margarete (1534-70). In 1539 she also suffered a miscarriage. In addition to their own children, they also raised four orphans, including Katharina's nephew.

After Luther's death in 1546, she and the family were in dire financial straits. She was asked to move out of the Black Cloister to more modest circumstances but refused to do so. With the outbreak of the Schmalkaldic War, the family had to flee to Magdeburg. Even though she soon returned, she again had to flee in 1547; however, this time there was little to return to since enemy troops had burned her house down. The Elector of Saxony generously provided for her. With the outbreak of plague and famine in 1552, she fled to Torgau. On the journey the horses bolted and she fell from the wagon, broke her hip, and died the next day. She is buried in the Marienkirche in Torgau. Even though she received financial help from Albrecht, Duke of Prussia and King Christian III of Denmark, it would appear that in her last years she lived in straightened financial circumstances and many of Luther's friends did not want to have much to do with her or the family.

Thomas, Apostle (21 December). All four Gospels mention St. Thomas as one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. John's Gospel, which calls him "the Twin," uses Thomas's questions to reveal truths about Jesus. It is Thomas who says, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?" To this question Jesus replies, "I am the Way, the Truth,

and the Life" (John 14,5-6). John also relates how Thomas, on the evening of the day of Jesus' resurrection from the dead,



doubted the report of the disciples that they had seen Jesus. Later, "doubting Thomas" became

"believing Thomas" when he confessed Jesus as "my Lord and my God" (John 20,24-29). According to tradition, Thomas traveled eastward after Pentecost, eventually reaching India, where still today a group of people call themselves "Christians of St. Thomas." Thomas was martyred for the faith by being speared to death at Mylapore near Madras, India. Several spurious works are attributed to Thomas, including the "Gospel of Thomas," which consists of epigrammatic and enigmatic sayings of Jesus, some of which parallel accounts in the real Gospels; this false Gospel was discovered among a collection of gnostic writings at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt and was probably written in Greek around AD 150. (Sources: *Treasury of Daily Prayer*, ed. Scot A. Kinnaman [St. Louis, CPH: 2006]: 1038-39; and, *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F. L. Cross [New York, Oxford University Press, 1983]: 1369-70)