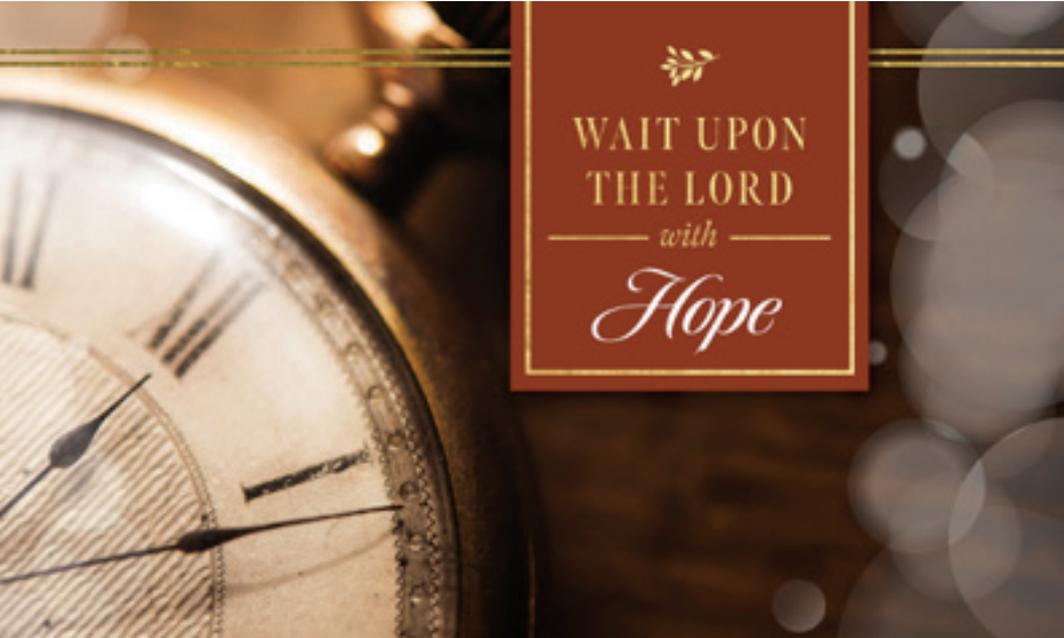


# SAINT STEPHENS

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## UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



WAIT UPON  
THE LORD

— with —

*Hope*

NOVEMBER 28, 2021 | 9:00 AM | FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY,  
YOU'RE WELCOME HERE!

## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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**Busy Bags** are available in the church entryway. Quite often, children can absorb what is going on in church if their hands are occupied and their minds do not have to focus so much on “behaving.” It takes a great deal of energy and concentration for a child to stay quiet and still. Please use the busy bags to occupy their hands so they are free to listen. Nudge them when it is time for a hymn and ask them to sing along with you. Encourage them to come forward for the Message for All Ages and to participate in presenting the offering. They may exit with their Sunday School teachers before the closing hymn.

Our Hearing Loop (hearing assistance device) has malfunctioned and needs replacement. We are sorry for the inconvenience. In the meantime, if you need to sit closer to a speaker, please do so.

Please respect each person’s decision regarding use of a mask and, masked or unmasked, please continue to stay a loving 6 feet or more apart from those with whom you do not live or work.

We will continue to remain seated while singing but we will sing.

Be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:2b-6, NRSV)

*Bill Watterson, Calvin and Hobbes, 20th century -  
“How come we play war and not peace?”  
“Too few role models.”*

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### PRELUDE

#### GREETING AND GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Luke 21:28)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the refining fire of the Holy Spirit,  
And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Alleluia! Stand up and raise your heads—your redemption is drawing near.

**Alleluia!**

CALL TO WORSHIP

O Lord our God, we stumble as those lost in the night.

**Will not day come soon?**

We live burdened by the sorrows and cares of this world.

**Will you help us soon?**

We hear the promise of your Word made flesh:

**Christ is coming soon!**

We long for the light of your salvation.

**Come and save us soon!**

CELEBRATION HYMN

*“Creator of the Stars of Night”*

#127

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES

(Lighting the First Candle of Advent)

This is the day we begin our journey to the Child, his Mother and the manger.

**May the small flame we have be enough to light our journey.**

It is a journey shrouded in a fading sun and a growing uncertainty as the world turns cold. And we journey anyway.

**May the small flame we have be enough to light our journey.**

We journey because we are drawn to God’s light at the end: it is God’s promise, borne into our lives.

**May the small flame we have be enough to light our journey.**

This is the day we begin our journey. May we kindle God’s light within us, together, as we journey on.

**Amen.**

We light this candle in Hope.

*The first Blue candle is lit*

GIFTS OF ANTICIPATION

RESPONSE

*“One Candle is Lit”* vs. 1

#128

LESSON FROM THE PROPHETS

Jeremiah 33:14-16

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.”

THE GOOD NEWS

Luke 21:25-36

[Jesus said:]<sup>25</sup> “There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. <sup>26</sup> People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup> Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

<sup>29</sup> Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup> as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>34</sup> “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup> like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

MESSAGE

Certainty in Confusion

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Comfort, Comfort You My People”

#122

INTERCESSORY PRAYER AND LORD’S PRAYER

MISSION MOMENT

Merrill Food Pantry

CALL TO THE OFFERING

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

“Give Thanks”

#528

PRAYER TO DEDICATE OUR OFFERING

.... Amen.

Amen.

(The children and Sunday School teachers may exit as we sing the closing hymn)

CLOSING HYMN **Requests**

BENEDICTION

Our time of speaking of God’s light ends,  
our time of carrying God’s light into the world begins anew.  
The creator of all light, The giver of all hope,

The strength of the voice crying in the wilderness,  
Guide your path this day and evermore.

**Amen.**

Go forth in renewed hope. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God.**

## RESPONSE

Jesus, Name Above All Names

Words and Music: Naida Hearn

© 1974, 1978, Scripture in Song

*Jesus, name above all names, Beautiful Savior, glorious Lord.*

*Emmanuel, God is with us, Blessed Redeemer, Living Word.*

## POSTLUDE

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## THANK YOU!

**Musicians** are Darlene Johnson and Terry Krueger.

**Coffee Fellowship** is sponsored by Cheryl Buck and Emily Schwartzman.

**Radio Ministry** is sponsored in memory of Art & Phil Schaefer, from the Prairie River Gang.

**Livestream Director:** Corey Dornbrack

**Radio Technical Director:** Mike Moellendorf

**\*\*Dinner @ Five is up and running! You're welcome to join in fellowship for the meal Monday, November 29.**

**We would also love to have more people volunteer to serve or sign up for the committee. Please call the church office if you are interested.**

### Menu:

*Turkey/Vegetable Soup and Ham sandwiches*



### Upcoming Events:

Dec. 3 - Return Christmas Spirit gifts by Friday, Dec. 3

Dec. 4 and 5 - 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM O'Tannenbaum Tour in  
basement of Saint Stephens

Dec. 10 -12 - Wausau Lyric Choir Performing "*Gloria! A Time to Rejoice!*" at  
First Presbyterian Church, Wausau (Friday & Sat. at 7:30 PM, Sunday at 3 PM)

Dec. 19 - Saint Stephens Sunday School Christmas program

## TAKING THE LESSONS HOME:

Help your children enjoy getting ready for Christmas as much as Christmas itself. Use the way Christmas is celebrated around the world to take some of the gift giving pressure off of Christmas. Give small gifts such as books on St. Nicholas day, December 6. In the Netherlands, children put out hay for St. Nicholas' horse. Take some gifts to the humane society on or around Dec. 6.

St. Lucy's day is celebrated in both Scandinavian countries and Italy on Dec. 13. It is a celebration of light in the midst of darkness. It is a good day to make candles, add some Christmas lights to your decorations or sing Christmas carols around a candle centerpiece. In Hungary, people plant wheat seeds on St. Lucy's day which grow to be an inch or more by Christmas day, symbolizing the hay in the manger. It is a good day to plant an indoor herb garden, available in many stores this time of year.

Some other ways to help make the seasons of Advent and Christmas a meaningful time in your home:

- Use the Advent Calendar for a daily time of prayer at breakfast, dinner or bedtime.
- Use one of the daily devotionals for your family time together, "How Do They Celebrate Christmas," is a good one for families to read together.
- Pick up a giving tag from the Christmas Spirit tree and invite your children to help shop for that child/person in need.
- Put a few canned goods or other non-perishable items in the blessing box at church, let your children pick out what they want to put in the box, helping them understand that some people do not have microwaves, stoves or the other ingredients needed for some items such as boxed macaroni and cheese



**Hear Ye, Hear Ye, Hear Ye  
Official Call  
For all Saint Stephens UCC Membership  
To the 2021 Annual Meeting  
December 12, 2021, at 9 AM**

This is the official call to all active members to the Annual Congregational Meeting of Saint Stephens United Church of Christ of Merrill, Wisconsin to be held on December 12, 2021, to begin during the usual time of worship at 9am.

The Agenda and Nominations for vacancies in the Church Council will be published by Sunday, November 28.

The agenda will include a vote on the Council's recommendation for revisions to the Constitution and By-laws of the Congregation. There is a link to these documents on our website [www.ststephensucc.net](http://www.ststephensucc.net), and print copies are available at the church for those who want them.

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715.536.7322

903 East 2nd Street, Merrill, Wisconsin 54452

[ststephensucc.net](http://ststephensucc.net)

Rev. Mike Southcombe  
Terra Holdridge  
Kimberly McCaskill  
Timothy Ruprecht  
Darlene Johnson  
Abrielle Tiffany

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