



December 10, 2023

"How Will We  
Clear A Path  
For God?"

Baptism of  
William Paul Stokes

Second Sunday  
of Advent

### **Welcome!**

Name tags are in the Narthex, welcome forms in the pews  
Feel free to bring coffee and tea into worship  
Optional nursery care for infant - age 3 (downstairs, starts at 9:25)

## **The Love of God Gathers Us**

### **Gathering Music**

*We greet those around us or sit quietly, settling into sacred time and space*

### **Ringing of the Bell**

### **Prelude and Candle Lighting** "Dona Nobis"

*German Round*

*Acknowledging the light of Christ among us*

### **Words of Welcome**

### **Opening Song (SPP #20)** "Waiting for You" **sung twice**

\* = Sitting or standing

## **Advent Candle Liturgy** *(responsive)*

We come to this season of Advent and gather around...

We light the candle of HOPE for Earth and air and seas, for the creatures dwelling among us and the plants alive with God's Spirit. We light the candle of PEACE in the midst of violence and conflict, fear at home, discord among neighbors and coworkers, terror in the street, wars that kill God's precious children. And we say that Peace is stronger. Let us pray:

**Emmanuel, we celebrate your Advent in Jesus with precious words and traditions, and we light an Advent of new hope in this time and place. Amen.**

### **\*Sung Response**

**"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"**

*traditional carol, words by Maren Tirabassi*

**O Come, Love's season, to our lonely days,  
and guide us in our words and ways  
to be the ones whose Advent begins  
with healing earth and all that live within.  
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel  
is come to birth where all God's children dwell.**

### **Acknowledging Our Need for God's Grace**

#### **\*Prayer of Confession and Longing** *(unison)*

**God of hope, help us to keep alive your vision of peace and wholeness.  
Where we have caused hurt, nudge us to acknowledge it and make amends.  
Where hope is a small seed, teach us to have faith in its growing.  
Where people find healing and new life, teach us to celebrate you at work.  
May we recognize you coming to us in these ways, through the grace of  
Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*...the singing bowl welcomes us into silent prayer*

#### **\*Assurance of Grace** *(responsive)*

**One: The peace of Christ be with you!      All: And also with you!**

## **\*Passing the Peace**

*We first wave toward those worshiping with us online  
To those around us: we offer a smile, peace sign, or handshake*

## **A Time With Children and Youth**

### **Sung Invitation**

*...as our young people come forward*

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine...  
...let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.**

## **Sacrament of Holy Baptism**

William Paul Stokes

### **Welcoming forward the Baptismal Family**

BJ & Claire Stokes (*parents*), Edith Stokes (*sister*)

Paul & Julie Walthour (*grandparents*)

Thomas & Hayley Walthour (*uncle & aunt*), Rhodes Walthour (*cousin*)

Bill & Betsy Stokes (*grandparents*)

Shaun Stokes (*uncle*)

Trevor & Kelsey Stokes (*uncle & aunt*)

### **Questions of the Baptismal Family**

### **Questions of the Gathered Community**

Members and friends of St. Croix United Church, do you promise to nurture William's faith by your loving actions? Will you continue to welcome him into the joys of God's world? Will you affirm William in his journey of faith — as he follows the way of Jesus with all his heart, mind, and strength? If so, please say, "we do and we will!"

### **Prayer over the Baptismal Waters**

*poured by Betsy "Nana" Stokes*

*William's baptismal waters have come from family cabins in Wisconsin and Minnesota*

### **The Act of Baptism**

## **Dedication** (*unison*)

**William, your life has been given to you, to your family, and to all of us as a gift from God. As we baptize you, we also rededicate ourselves to God. We promise to do our best as channels of God's love for you – teaching you the ways of our friend and savior, Jesus, and empowering you though the Holy Spirit. May God's love continue to shine upon you and through you. Amen.**

**Reading**                    "Remember" by Joy Harjo                    *read by Julie "Grammie" Walthour*

## **A Prayer for William and His Community**

### **Presentation of a Gift and Certificate**

*"I have called you by name, you are mine." (Isaiah 43:1)*

### **Blessing One Another**

*We open our arms to the children and youth*

Children: God be with you

**All: And also with you**

### **Sung Affirmation**

*...as young people depart or return to families*

**Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine...  
...let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.**

*Infant - age 3 | nursery care available (9:25-10:30) downstairs  
PreK-Gr. 1 | gather now for Sunday School downstairs  
Older Children (gr. 2-4) & Youth Group (gr. 5-12) | remain in worship  
We welcome sounds and movements of children who stay in worship.*

## **Proclaiming God's Love**

**A Reading from *Psalms for Praying***

Psalm 85:1-2,8-13

**A Reading from the Gospels | *The Inclusive Bible***

Mark 1:1-8

**Morning Message**

"How Will We Clear a Path for God?"

## Responding To God's Love

**Prayer Song (SPP #61)**

**“Call to Prayer”  
verses 1 & 3**

### **Prayers of the People**

*We share aloud prayers for ourselves, others, and parts of the world  
We add them to our Prayer Corner (tell Pastor Clare if you don't want yours printed)*

**One: God, in your love**

**All: Hear our prayer**

### **Prayer of Jesus (unison)**

**Our Father and Mother who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name.**

**Thy kin-dom come. Thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:**

**For thine is the kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever.  
Amen.**

### **Invitation to the Offering**

*Greeters pass offering plates.*

*We give by cash, check or electronically (scanning the QR code).*

*Pledged gifts marked for a predecessor church are tracked accordingly.*

*Loose offerings go to St. Croix United Church.*



### **Offertory**

**“Emmanuel”**

*McGee*

### **\*Offertory Response**

**“In the Bleak Midwinter”**

**What can I offer, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;  
but what can I offer: all my heart.**



## PRAYER CORNER

*Please hold these joys and concerns in your prayers:*

### *For persons known to us...*

\*With Megan Adams, we pray for her friend **Farrah and her family** as they navigate grief and logistics in the aftermath of a house fire last Saturday.

\*With Mary Maren Bjork, we pray that love will surround her cousin **Jan** as she grieves the recent death of her husband, Larry (from complications from pneumonia on top of cancer).

\*For **Lisa Culbertson**, swift healing from COVID.

\*With Bob and Cheri Schwartz, we give thanks as granddaughter **Bea** returns to Kindergarten and continue to pray for her wellbeing.

\*With **Jere Fetter**, we give thanks for the return of strength and continued healing.

### *And in the wider community...*

\*For **all veterans**, full access to physical and mental health resources that support them in living full lives after bravely serving our country.

## Mark your calendar for the next Blood Drive!

**Dec. 22nd** | 9am—3pm

Register by calling 1-800-733-2767 OR at [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org), enter “Bayport”

Volunteers needed:

**8-9am** | Setup (welcome Red Cross staff, hold doors open, etc.)

**9-11am** | Greeters (check-in, show people where to go)

**11am-1pm** | Greeters

**1pm-3pm** | Greeters

**3-4pm** | Tear-down (available to assist Red Cross staff)

Call or email Megan to volunteer: [office@peoplescongregational.org](mailto:office@peoplescongregational.org)



Help us stock the **Free Little Pantry**  
by placing items in the grocery cart in the Narthex.

Needed: summer sausage, tuna packets, boxed grains, boxed pastas, cereal, oatmeal, granola bars, snack crackers, dried fruit, beef jerky

*\*Please note that protein and high-quality items are preferred  
\*\*Cardboard and plastic packages (no glass or metal during winter)*



## Christmas Solstice Service | Dec. 21, 7pm

“Light in the Darkness:

### A Contemplative Christmas Solstice Service

*Acknowledging both difficult & nurturing darkness,  
we honor what is and what may be... God with us in both.*

## Christmas Eve Services | Dec. 24

**3pm** (special music) and **10pm** (choral music)

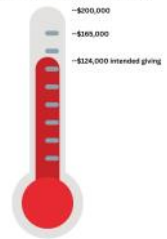
## Thanks for all submitted Intended Giving Forms!

Thus far, 30 giving units are intending \$124,000.

Our goal zone for 2024 giving is \$165-200k.

If you are a member or friend who anticipates offering financial support in 2024, **please turn in your form at your soonest convenience.** (*Giving Forms in Narthex.*)

Goal Zone: \$165,000 - \$200,000



Thank you to today's partners: Sharon Neuenfeldt (Worship Accompanist), Michael Bjork (Choir Director), SCUC Choir, Bob Dickie (greeter), Jonah Gromoll & Addison Albright (youth greeters), Cheri Schwartz (liturgist), Sam Gromoll (acolyte), Sue Favilla (fellowship), William Stokes' Family (cake for celebration), Paul Spilseth, Bob Dickie & Mark Stephan (tech team), Lisa Culbertson (Childcare Provider), Carol Dusbabek, Claire Spilseth, Roger Klisch (PreK-Gr1), Wendy Staberg (Gr2-4), Alisea Rangel (Sunday School Float), Sue Favilla (Youth Group), Jackie Savage (sanctuary organizer, outdoor sign), Andi Favilla and Jenni Shaller (decorations)




## St. Croix United Church

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# Waiting for You

20

♩=110

D A/D Gadd9 D

We are wait - ing for you, know-ing that you\_

A/D Gadd9 D A/D Gadd9

al-ways a - bide,\_\_\_ we are wak - ing\_ to your pres-ence

D A/D Gadd9

and our hearts are\_\_\_ o - pen wide,

A<sup>7</sup>sus D A/D Gadd9 A<sup>7</sup>sus D

o - pen\_ wide.\_\_\_ o - pen\_ wide.

Words and Music: Christopher Grundy

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## Call to Prayer

♩=100

D G/D A/D G/D

D D/F# G D

1. Float - ing and flam - ing and fill - ing new life.  
 2. Search - ing and sav - ing and sooth - ing in - deed.  
 3. Call - ing and car - ing and chang - ing each heart.

F#m Bm E A

Hov - 'ring and heal - ing and help - ing with sighs.  
 Teach - ing and turn - ing and tak - ing the lead;  
 Lov - ing and lift - ing us to a new start;

Em A Bm/A A7 D/F# Em

Spir - it at work since the dawn - ing of time;  
 Fa - ther - ing, Moth - er - ing, birth - ing new ways;  
 Je - sus our Sav - ior, our teach - er, our Lord;

A Bm C#dim Bm G Em/G A D

meet us right here, touch us right now.  
 meet us right here, touch us right now.  
 meet us right here, touch us right now.

A Bm C#dim Bm G Em A D

Meet us right here, touch us right now.  
 Meet us right here, touch us right now.  
 Meet us right here, touch us right now.

## There's a Voice in the Wilderness

*Isa. 40:3-11; Ps. 103:15-17**J. Lewis Milligan, 1925; alt.*

1 There's a voice in the wil - der - ness cry - ing, a  
 2 O Zi - on, who of - fers good tid - ings, to the  
 3 But the word of our God is for - ev - er, our De -

call from the ways un - trod: Pre - pare in the des - ert a  
 height of the moun - tains dare! Lift your voice to the cit - ies of  
 fend - er's will is strong; God stands in the midst of

high - way, a high - way for our God! The  
 Ju - dah: "Be - hold your God!" de - clare. Like the  
 na - tions, to ren - der right the wrong. Then

*Before moving to Canada, J. Lewis Milligan was a successful British journalist and poet. This text was written in 1925 to celebrate the union of three churches into The United Church of Canada, a body he served as public relations director.*

Tune: ASCENSION Irr.  
 H. Hugh Bancroft, 1938

val - leys shall be ex - alt - ed, the loft - y hills brought  
 flowers of the field we per - ish, our hu - man works de -  
 God shall be as a shep-herd, the lambs gath-ered to God's

low: make straight all the crook - ed pla - ces  
 cay, the power and pomp of na - tions  
 breast; and pas - tures of peace shall greet them,

where Em - man - u - el may go!  
 shall pass like a dream a - way.  
 to give to the wea - ry rest.