

Stephen Foster: Two Hundred Years of Song

An American Song Jukebox

Elias Mokole, baritone
Linda Turpening, piano

Sunday, July 12, 2026 – 3:00 p.m.

Highview Christiania Lutheran Church
26690 Highview Ave.

Farmington, MN 55024

Phone: 952-469-2722

Email: highviewlutheran@gmail.com

Free will offering



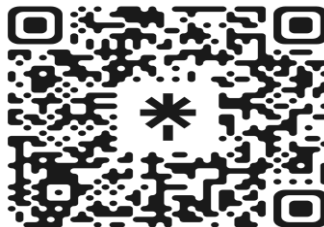
Born on the 4th of July 1826

Celebrating the 200th anniversary of Stephen Foster's birth during America's 250th anniversary year.

Audience members will be invited to select from a menu of Stephen Foster favorites throughout the recital.

The program also includes Revolutionary-era American songs and selections by Charles Ives.

Free Admission



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Foster Tips (for weekly bulletins)

1. Foster 200 and America 250

Did you know? Stephen Foster was born on July 4, 1826, making 2026 both the 200th anniversary of his birth and America's 250th anniversary year.

2. Alice Fair and Christmas Music

Did you know? Stephen Foster's *Sweetly She Sleeps, My Alice Fair* was published in 1850—the same year the tune most people know as *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* was written by Richard Storrs Willis. Although there is no evidence that the composers knew one another's work, two enduring American melodies were born in the same year.

3. A Good Time Coming

Did you know? Stephen Foster wrote *There's a Good Time Coming* in 1863, near the end of his life. The song looks forward to a brighter future at a time when the United States was deeply divided by the Civil War. Its hopeful message remains surprisingly relevant today.

4. That's What's the Matter

Did you know? Most people associate Stephen Foster with tender songs such as *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair* and *Beautiful Dreamer*. But *That's What's the Matter* (1862) offers a witty look at a society divided by arguments over loyalty, rights, and changing times. Its humor reminds us that every generation thinks it lives in unusually difficult times.

5. Old Dog Tray and Abraham Lincoln

Did you know? *Old Dog Tray* was one of Stephen Foster's most beloved songs during his lifetime. The song was reportedly a favorite of President Abraham Lincoln, who is said to have requested it during the Civil War.

6. Beautiful Dreamer

Did you know? *Beautiful Dreamer* was published in 1864, shortly after Stephen Foster's death at age 37. Today it remains one of his best-known songs and has been translated and performed around the world.

7. America's First Great Songwriter

Did you know? Long before radio, recordings, or movies, Stephen Foster's songs were sung in homes, schools, and community gatherings across the country. Many historians consider him America's first great popular songwriter.

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Sunday, June 28, 2026 • 3:00 p.m.
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
1325 North 45th Avenue East
Duluth, MN 55804



Linda Turpening, piano, has served as a church organist, pianist, and independent music teacher for many years and has also taught at several colleges and conservatories. She holds an Artist Diploma in Piano from the Philadelphia Musical Academy and a Master of Arts in Music from the University of Pennsylvania, where she pursued doctoral studies with an emphasis on the works of Gabriel Fauré. She remains active with the American Guild of Organists.

Elias Mokole, baritone, has appeared in more than 800 performances throughout the United States and internationally, with a repertoire spanning opera, concert works, and American song. He has taught voice at several universities, including the University of Minnesota Duluth, and is the creator of *Developing Your Authentic Voice*, an approach that connects classical voice training to everyday communication.

Mokole and Turpening have collaborated on recitals and community programs for organizations and venues including the World of Accordions Museum in Superior and the Historic Scott House. Their programs have also supported organizations such as Medical Missionaries, Second Harvest, and Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, offering free public performances while helping raise funds for community needs.