



ST PAUL PINE GROVE MILLS

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



COMFORT CHRISTMAS SERVICE — WITH HOLY COMMUNION
DECEMBER 18, 2024

PRELUDE: "Pastorale" (from "The Messiah")

(arr. by Lani Smith)

*OPENING DIALOGUE

P: The Spirit and the church cry out:

A: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P: All those who await his appearance pray:

A: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

*HYMN OF LIGHT — *The King Shall Come*

(ELW 260)



*THANKSGIVING FOR LIGHT — JOHN 1:1-5, 14

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

*HYMN — *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*

(ELW 249; v. 1,4)

1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.

PSALM (read responsively)

R: I lift up my eyes to the hills — from where will my help come?

A: My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

R: He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

A: He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

R: The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

A: The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

R: The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

A: The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

SILENCE FOR MEDITATION

***HYMN** — *Comfort. Comfort, Now my People*

(ELW 256)



1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be-fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for-ev - er.
Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

READING — JOHN 20: 24-29

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

***HYMN** — *Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow*

(ELW 327; v. 1-2)



1 Through the night of doubt and sor - row, on - ward
2 One the light of God's own pres - ence on the



goes the pil - grim band, sing - ing songs of ex - pec -
ran - somed peo - ple shed, chas - ing far the gloom and



ta - tion, march - ing to the prom - ised land. Clear be -
ter - ror, bright - 'ning all the path we tread. One the



fore us through the dark - ness gleams and burns the
ob - ject of our jour - ney, one the faith which



guid - ing light; pil - grim clasps the hand of
nev - er tires, one the ear - nest look - ing



pil - grim step - ping fear - less through the night.
for - ward, one the hope our God in - spires.

READING — ISAIAH 9: 2-7

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

HYMN — *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

(ELW 257; v. 1-4)



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



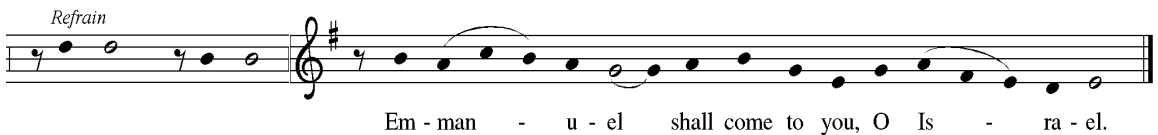
Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

READING — REVELATION 21: 1-7

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." ⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. ⁷Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

HYMN — O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

(ELW 257; v. 5,6,7)



5 O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery. *Refrain*

7 O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*

6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain*

READING — MATTHEW 1: 18-25

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

HOMILY

*PRAYER

P: O God, maker of heaven and earth, you help us in times of distress and watch over us day and night. Hold us securely in your mercy, that is the midst of fear and danger we may depend on you, our sure deliverer, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

A: Amen.

***PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

P: In the spirit of this season, let us now confidently ask God for all the things we need. For ourselves as we participate in the Christmas celebration; God, hear our prayer.

A: And in your mercy answer.

P: For our families and friends, that they may continue to help and support us; God, hear our prayer.

A: And in your mercy answer.

P: For the people we have loved who have died; For all the losses that we know, that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise; God, hear our prayer.

A: And in your mercy answer.

P: For all our family and friends, that they may know love, peace, and happiness in you; God, hear our prayer.

A: And in your mercy answer.

P: For the peace proclaimed by the Christmas angels to come throughout the whole world: God, hear our prayer.

A: And in your mercy answer.

P: O Lord our god, you see and know and feel the pain of the world. Look upon us when we feel alone, and enfold us with your love, that in the midst of pain we may know your presence; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

A: Amen.

***THE PEACE**

***THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

OPENING DIALOGUE

P: The Lord be with you.

A: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

A: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

A: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS — *HOLY, HOLY, HOLY*

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!

God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Text: Reginald Heber, 1783-1826, alt.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE — EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

A: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

A: Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

A: Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

A: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

COMMUNION

AGNUS DEI — *JUST AS I AM, WITHOUT ONE PLEA*

(ELW 592)



1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was
2 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y_a con - flict,
3 Just as I am, thou wilt re - ceive, wilt wel - come, par - don,
4 Just as I am; thy love un - known has bro - ken ev - 'ry



shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
man - y_a doubt, fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out,
cleanse, re - lieve; be - cause thy prom - ise I be - lieve,
bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,



O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

COMMUNION HYMN — *What Child Is This?*

(ELW 296)



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

CANDLE LIGHTING — REMEMBRANCE RITUAL

P: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." We light these candles in remembrance of those whom we have loved and lost, in remembrance of relationships that have wilted, in thankfulness for the family and friends we still have, and in thankfulness for the gift of life that we receive in Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate.

Light from the paschal candle will be distributed to the congregation by the pastor and ushers. To light your candle, tip the unlit candle to receive the light. NEVER TIP A LIT CANDLE. Once the light has been distributed to all, there will be a moment of silence after which we will sing *Silent Night*.

***HYMN** — *Silent Night*

(ELW 281)



	<i>Stil - le</i>	<i>Nacht,</i>	<i>hei - li - ge</i>	<i>Nacht!</i>	<i>Al - les</i>	<i>schläft,</i>
1	Si - lent	night,	ho - ly	night!	All	is calm,
2	Si - lent	night,	ho - ly	night!	Shep - herds	quake
3	Si - lent	night,	ho - ly	night!	Son	of God,



<i>ein - sam</i>	<i>wacht</i>	<i>nur</i>	<i>das</i>	<i>trau - te,</i>	<i>hoch - hei - li - ge</i>	<i>Paar.</i>
all	is	bright	round	yon	vir - gin	moth - er and child.
at	the	sight;	glo - ries	stream	from	heav - en a - far,
love's	pure	light	ra - diant	beams	from	your ho - ly face,



<i>Hold - er</i>	<i>Kna - be</i>	<i>im</i>	<i>lok - ki - gen</i>	<i>Haar,</i>	<i>schlaf</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>himm - li - scher</i>
Ho - ly	In - fant,	so	ten - der	and mild,	sleep	in	heav - en - ly
heav'n - ly	hosts . . .	sing,	al - le - lu - ia!	Christ,	the	Sav - ior,	is
with	the	dawn	of	re - deem - ing	grace,	Je - sus,	Lord, at your



<i>Ruh,</i>	<i>schlaf</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>himm - li - scher</i>	<i>Ruh.</i>
peace,	sleep	in	heav - en - ly	peace.
born!	Christ,	the	Sav - ior,	is born!
birth,	Je - sus,	Lord,	at your	birth.

At the conclusion of the hymn, the pastor will continue.

P: Let us pray. Gracious and Loving God, we come to you broken and humble people. We mourn the loss of those who are precious to us, and struggle to continue in our lives without them. We mourn the loss of relationships, and struggle to find joy in this season of rejoicing. Be with us as we mourn these loses, especially those we now name, either silently or aloud...Hear our cries, O Lord, and listen, when w pray, trusting in your Son, Jesus our Savior and Lord. **A: Amen.**

*BLESSING

P: Go into the world, comforted by God who loves, led by Christ the light of the world, and strengthened by the Holy Spirit who gives us the ability to love and serve.
Almighty God bless you — Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit. **A: Amen.**

*SENDING HYMN — *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

(ELW 254)



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Pastor Tomkiel will be available at the altar for private prayer and anointing of those who so desire it. Simply come forward to the Pastor. If someone is already with the Pastor, please wait to meet with him in the front pew.

POSTLUDE: "Coventry Carol"

(arr. by Robert J. Hughes)



SERVING TODAY

Worship Leaders.....Pastor Paul Tomkiel
Assisting Minister..... Morgen Hummel
Organist..... H. Ryan Ditmer
Sacristan..... Delorse Homan
Reader..... Morgen Hummel

ABOUT ST. PAUL

PURPOSE

We are a beacon, boldly sharing the light of Jesus' grace and love.

MISSION

Guided by Jesus, we strengthen faith, deepen compassion, extend generosity,
and serve community.

CORE VALUES

Faith ♡ Compassion ♡ Generosity ♡ Community

OUR BIBLE VERSES

As Paul was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. [Jesus said,] 'Paul is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before the nations.'—Acts 9:3,15

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

St. Paul is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Susquehannock people, where we gather for worship this morning. We also acknowledge the Seneca, Cayuga, Lenne Lenape, as well as all of our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to care for this place – this land – and call it their home.

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