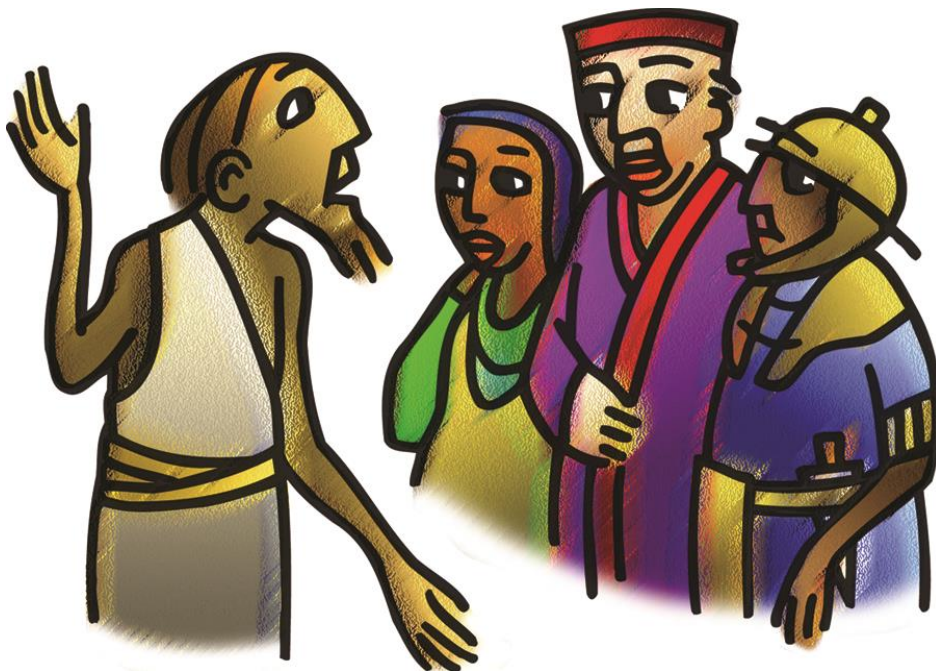




ST PAUL PINE GROVE MILLS

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 8, 2024

Whenever you see an asterisk (*), you are invited to stand as you are able.
You are invited to speak sans serif **Bolded type** with the congregation.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

PRELUDE: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

(Charles Callahan)

GATHERING

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.
A: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin, in the presence of God and of one another.

P: God of mercy, **we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

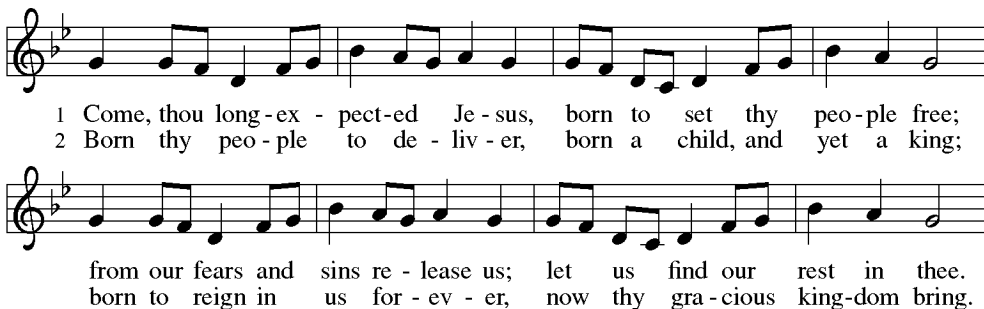
P: God of might, **we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.**

P: God in our midst, **we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **A: Amen.**

*GATHERING 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.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

*GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **A: And also, with you.**

KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer-cy.**

For the peace from above, and for our sal-va-tion, let us

pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer-cy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the u-ni-ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer-cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,
 let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer-cy.
 Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord.
 A - men.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Refrain
 This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
 al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.
 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us
 free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er, rich-es, wis-dom, and
 strength, and hon-or, bless-ing, and glo-ry are his.
Refrain
 This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
 al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God, and join in the
hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or, glo - ry, and
might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.
Final refrain
This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God,
for the Lamb who was slain has be - gun his reign.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you. **A: And also, with you.**

P: Let us pray. Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **A: Amen.**

*LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH (*Christ be our Light, verse 2*)

2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for
hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957
 Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell
 Text and music © 1993 Bernadette Farrell. Published by OCP Publications, 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213.
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For he is like a refiner's fire and like washers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD, as in the days of old and as in former years.

L: The word of the Lord. **A: Thanks be to God.**

CANTICLE: LUKE 1:68-79 "Blessed Be the God of Israel"

(ELW 250)

Usually the response to the first reading is a psalm, but occasionally (especially during Advent), it is another song from Scripture. Today's is the song sung by John the Baptist's father at his birth. This canticle, known as the Benedictus, is traditionally the featured canticle of the Morning Prayer office.



1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free
2 With prom - ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call,
3 My child, as proph - et of the Lord you will pre - pare the way,



and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da - vid's tree.
the oath once sworn to A - bra - ham, from foes to save us all;
to tell God's peo - ple they are saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.



So have the proph - ets long de - clared that with a might - y arm
that we might wor - ship with - out fear and of - fer lives of praise,
Then shall God's mer - cy from on high shine forth and nev - er cease



God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.
in ho - li - ness and righ - teous - ness to serve God all our days.
to drive a - way the gloom of death and lead us in - to peace.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944, based on Luke 1:68-79

Music: FOREST GREEN, English folk tune

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SECOND READING: PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11

Philippians is perhaps Paul's happiest letter, delighting in the support and faithfulness of the community. Ironically, it is written from one of Paul's unhappiest situations, as he is imprisoned. As always, however, Paul is confident that present sufferings will not compare to the joy at the return of Christ in justice and glory.

³ I thank my God for every remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every one of my prayers for all of you, praying with joy ⁵ for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, for all of you are my partners in God's grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the tender affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰ to help you to determine what really matters, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹ having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

L: The word of the Lord. **A: Thanks be to God.**

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia.

Prepare the way of the Lord.

Repeat alleluias

All flesh shall see the salva - tion of God.

*GOSPEL READING: LUKE 3:1-6

Luke did not set the births of John the Baptist and Jesus in some mythological never-never land, but took care to place them in a specific historical period (during the reigns of Augustus Caesar and Herod the Great). Here, thirty years later, as their ministries begin, he describes the historical situation at length. Perhaps he is not only making sure that the Word of God comes into particular places and times, but that it does not always come through the means (like priests and kings) we would expect.

P: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, the third chapter. **A: Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ He went into

all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;

make his paths straight.

⁵ Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth,

⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”

P: The gospel of the Lord. **A: Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: “On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry”

(ELW 249)



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
way for God with - in, and let us all our
rise our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. composite

Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621

*NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,**

maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

A brief silence.

L: Refining God, move through your church. Root out practices that harm your people, and kindle a fire for sharing the gospel among bishops, pastors, deacons, and all the baptized.

Lord, in your mercy,

A: receive our prayer.

L: Renewing God, transform your creation. Steer us from habits that harm what you have made, and guide us in practices that preserve and restore creatures and habitats. Lord, in your mercy,

A: receive our prayer.

L: Ruling God, teach the nations your ways. Strengthen organizations and communities that broker peace and care for refugees, immigrants, and all caught in the center of conflict (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

A: receive our prayer.

L: Rescuing God, restore your people who are in any need. Heal all who are suffering (*especially*). Provide comfort and strength, and nurture sustained wholeness for the future. Lord, in your mercy,

A: receive our prayer.

L: Reforming God, fill this congregation with your presence. Enrich our seasonal preparations, and bless the efforts by worship committees, music ensembles, staff, clergy, and lay leaders as they work in the weeks ahead. Lord, in your mercy,

A: receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: Reassuring God, we remember those who have died and rest in you, especially John Kessinger. Guide us in deep gratitude for their life, and allow us to learn from their faithful witness. Lord, in your mercy,

A: receive our prayer.

L: Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

A: Amen.

***PEACE**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **A: And also with you.**

MEAL

OFFERING



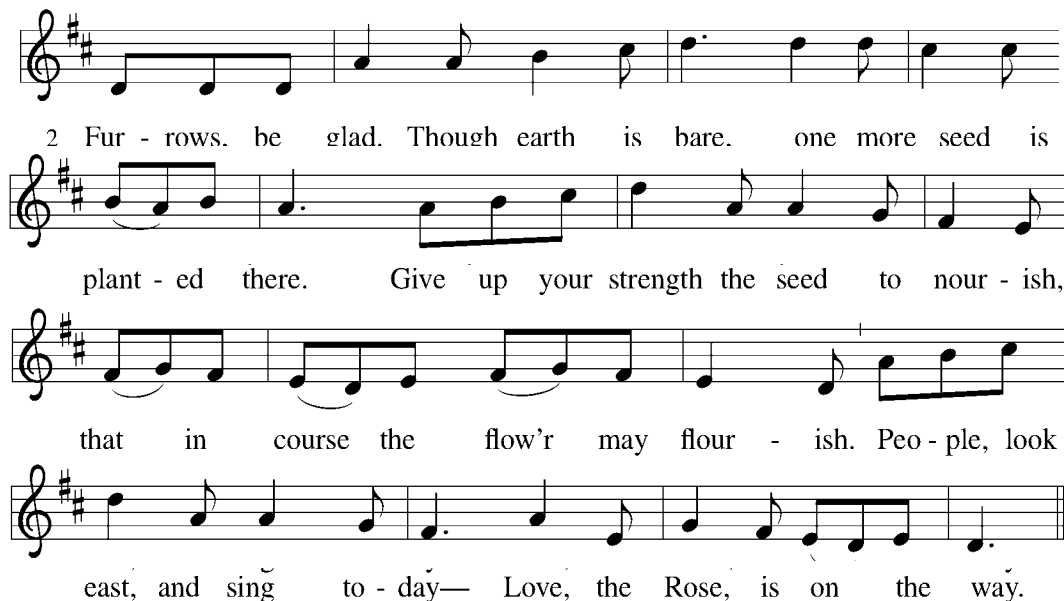
Offerings can be made online at stpaulpgm.org/give, mailed to St. Paul Lutheran Church, PO Box 200, Pine Grove Mills, PA 16868, placed in the mail slot (outside door to Pastor Paul's office), or in the offering plate located in the lobby/narthex near the entrance of the sanctuary.

MUSICAL OFFERING: "As the Dark Awaits the Dawn"

(David Lasky)

OFFERTORY: "People, Look East" vs. 2

(ELW 248)



2 Fur - rows. be glad. Though earth is bare. one more seed is
plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,
that in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881–1965

Music: BESANÇON, French carol

Text © Miss E. Farjeon Will Trust, by permission of David Higham Associates.

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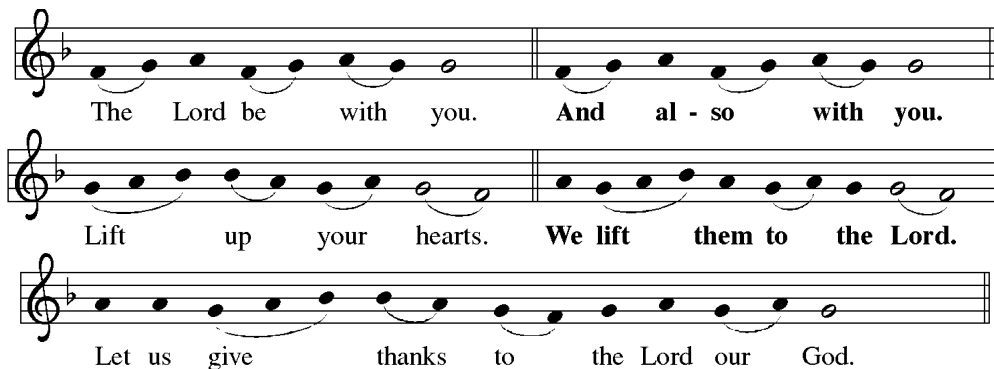
*OFFERING PRAYER

L: Let us pray: Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

* DIALOGUE



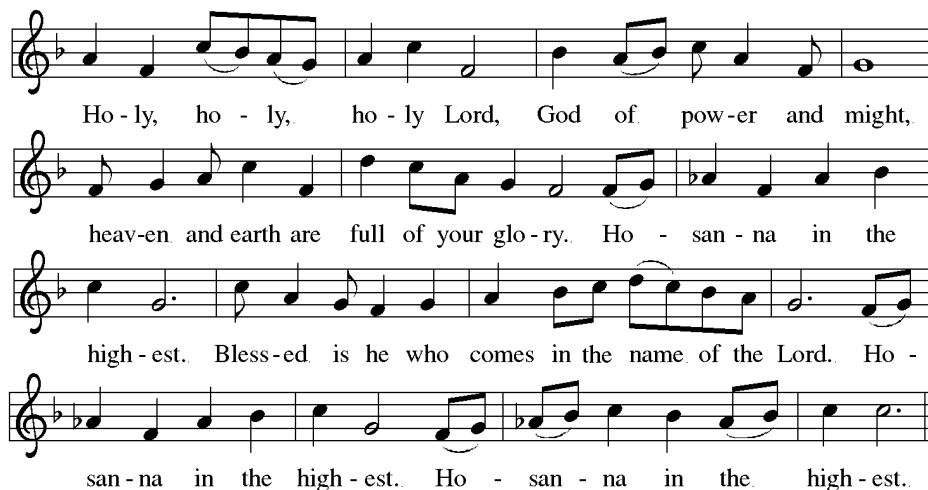
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



*PREFACE

P: 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. You comfort your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. 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



*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P: Holy God, the Beginning and the End,
 our Salvation and our Hope,
 we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty.

When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair,
 you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.

At this end of the ages
 your Son Jesus came to bring us your love
 and to heal all the suffering world.

In the night in which he was handed over,
 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.

Until his glorious Advent, we proclaim the mystery of our faith:
A: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore,
his life, death, and resurrection,
we await his coming again
in righteousness and peace.

A: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Send your Spirit on us
and on this bread and wine we share:
strengthen our faith,
increase our hope,
and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

A: Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.

A: Amen

***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;

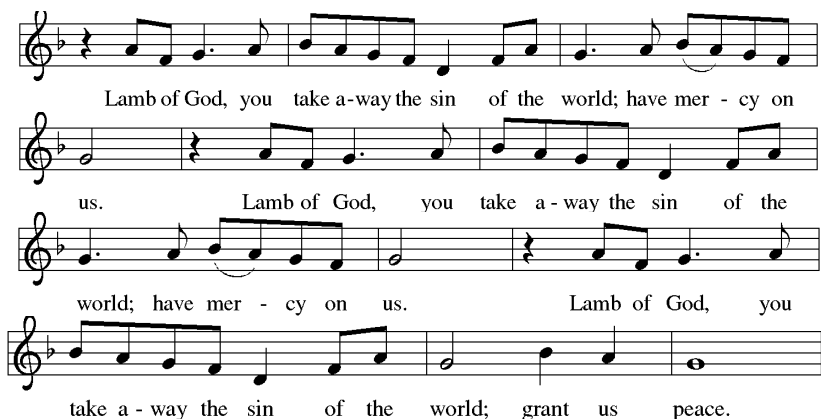
**and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

*LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace.

A NOTE ON COMMUNION WAFERS



To topple barriers that prevent participation in worship, we want to make it possible for individuals with Celiac Disease or gluten intolerant to be able to eat the Body of our Lord. Our default wafers are made by Parish Crossroads and are known as "Low Gluten Wafers" because they contain trace amounts of gluten. However, the wafers are tested at least once a year for how much gluten is in them.

Since 2020, the wafers have routinely tested to contain 15ppm gluten or less (The US FDA defines most food products with 20ppm or less as "gluten free"). Use the QR Code and look for the link that gives the most recent test results.

If you still have concerns, we have some truly gluten-free wafers available upon request.

COMMUNION

L: The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. **A: Amen.**

COMMUNION HYMN: "Carol Our Christmas"

A New Zealand Christmas Carol

With spirit (♩. = 56)
Unison

1. Car - ol our Christ - mas, an up - side down Christ - mas:
 2. Sing of the gold and the green and the spar - kle,
 3. Shep - herds and mus - ter - ers move o - ver hill - sides,
 4. Right side up Christ - mas be - longs to the u - ni - verse,

snow is not fall - ing and trees are not bare.
 wa - ter and riv - er and lure of the beach.
 find - ing, not an - gels, but sheep to be shorn;
 made in the mo - ment a wo - man gives birth;

Car - ol the sum - mer and wel - come the Christ Child,
 Sing in the hap - pi - ness of o - pen spac - es,
 wise ones make jour - neys, what - ev - er the sea - son,
 hope is the Je - sus gift, love is the of - fering,

warm in our sun - shine and sweet - ness of air.
 sing a na - ti - vi - ty sum - mer can reach!
 search - ing for signs of the truth to be born.
 ev - ery - where, an - y - where, here on the earth.

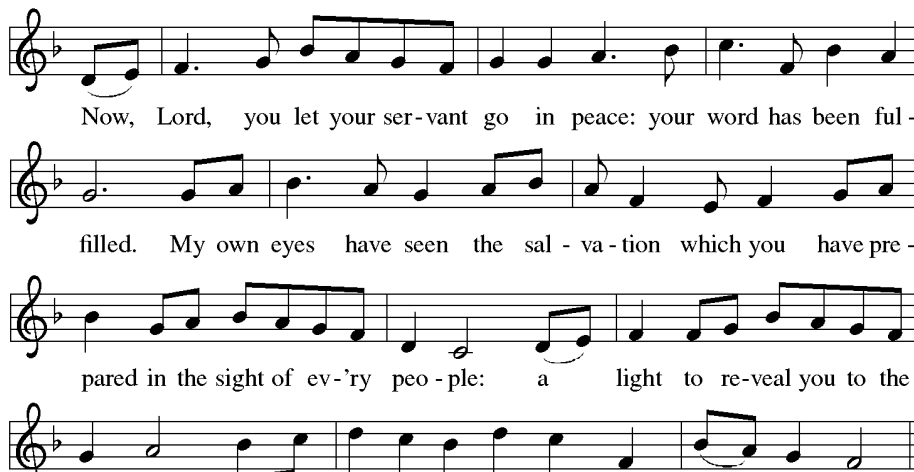
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*POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

L: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in grace.

A: Amen.

*POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE – *Nunc Dimittis* (Now, Lord)



Now, Lord, you let your ser-vant go in peace: your word has been ful-
filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre -
pared in the sight of ev-'ry peo - ple: a light to re-veal you to the
na - tions and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.

*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

L: Let us pray. Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name. **A: Amen.**

SENDING

*SENDING OF COMMUNION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

You may be seated.

*BLESSING

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the name of the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **A: Amen.**

*SENDING HYMN: "Prepare the Royal Highway"

(ELW 264)



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

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*DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

A: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: "Prepare the Royal Highway"

(Michael Burkhardt)



DAILY READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, December 8

Malachi 3:1-4
Baruch 5:1-9 {alternate}
Luke 1:68-79 (78)
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6

Thursday, December 12

Amos 6:1-8
2 Corinthians 8:1-15
Isaiah 12:2-6

Monday, December 9

Isaiah 40:1-11
Romans 8:22-25
Psalm 126

Friday, December 13

Isaiah 12:2-6
2 Corinthians 9:1-15
Isaiah 12:2-6

Tuesday, December 10

Isaiah 19:18-25
2 Peter 1:2-15
Psalm 126

Saturday, December 14

Amos 9:8-15
Luke 1:57-66
Isaiah 12:2-6

Wednesday, December 11

Isaiah 35:3-7
Luke 7:18-30
Psalm 126



SERVING TODAY

Worship Leader.....Pastor Paul Tomkiel
Assisting Minister.....Michelle McMullen
Musician..... James Rearick
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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