



ST. PAUL'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



What do
you fear?

IN THE TIME OF HEROD, WE
LONG FOR GOD TO BREAK IN

GATHERING

PRELUDE

*CALL TO WORSHIP

P: On Sundays and Mondays,
C: **on good days and bad days,**
P: early in the morning and very late at night,
C: **To here in this room, and out in the world,**
God, we long for you to break in.
P: Meet us in this space.
C: **Surprise us with your presence.**
P: God says,
C: **"You are precious and honored in my sight."**
P: Fill this room with your good news.
C: **With hope, we sing, we worship, we pray. Amen!**

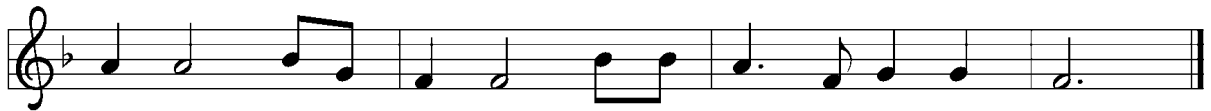
*PROCESSIONAL HYMN

My Lord, What a Morning

Refrain



My Lord, what a morn-ing; my Lord, what a morn - ing; oh,



my Lord, what a morn-ing, when the stars be - gin to fall.



- 1 You will hear the trum - pet sound,
- 2 You will hear the sin - ner cry, to wake the na-tions un-der - ground,
- 3 You will hear the Chris-tian shout,



Refrain

look-ing to my God's right hand, when the stars be-gin to fall.

Text: African American spiritual
Music: BURLEIGH, African American spiritual

*STAND AS YOU ARE ABLE

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P: Friends, if you long to feel closer to God, then the Prayer of Confession is a step in the right direction. For in the Prayer of Confession, we lay our hearts before God. We pour out the truth of our lives. We do not hide anything from our Creator, and in that simple act, God somehow always feels closer.

So join me in this prayer. Join me as we invite God to draw closer, to break in here.

C: Ever-present God, we long to feel you close. We long to feel your presence in our lives. We long for you to break through the chaos and suffering of this world. However, if we're honest, we rarely stand still long enough to feel you in our midst. Forgive our rushing and distractions. Forgive our wandering hearts, and center us in this space. Remind us that even in the time of Herod, even on the longest nights, you are always there. Amen

P: Family of faith, even when we doubt God's presence, even when we fail to notice God's fingerprints in this world. God is always moving closer to us. Hear and believe the good news this Advent season:

C: Nothing can keep God's love away. We are seen. We are forgiven. We are not alone. Amen.

***CANDLE LIGHTING**

P: In a world full of fear, where do you see hope?

C: We see hope when we look to the next generation. We feel hopeful when we gather together. We know hope, deep in our bones, when we dream of a better world.

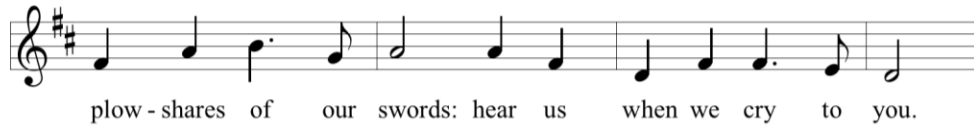
P: Even in a fearful world, hope is all around us. Today we light the candle of hope as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that we have reason to hope.

Light candle

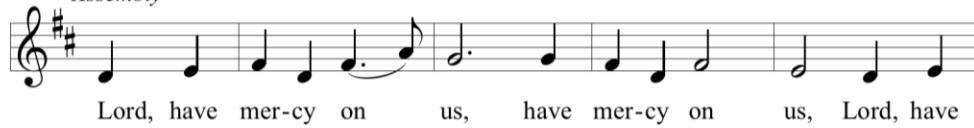
C: Thanks be to God! Amen.

KYRIE

Cantor



Assembly



Cantor



Assembly



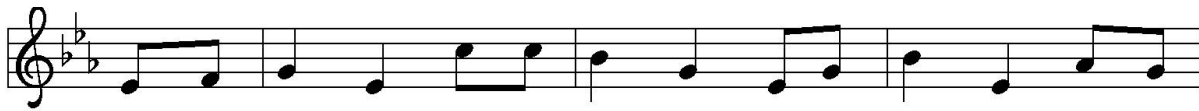
Cantor



Assembly



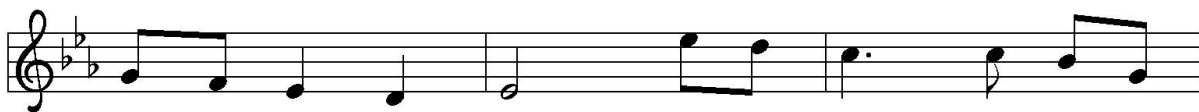
JOYOUS LIGHT OF HEAVENLY GLORY



1 Joy - ous light of heav'n-ly glo - ry, lov-ing glow of God's own
 2 In the stars that grace the dark - ness, in the blaz - ing sun of
 3 You who made the heav-en's splen - dor, ev-'ry danc - ing star of



face, you who sing cre - a - tion's sto - ry, shine on
 dawn, in the light of peace and wis - dom, we can
 night, make us shine with gen - tle jus - tice, let us



ev - 'ry land and race. Now as eve - ning falls a -
 hear your qui - et song. Love that fills the night with
 each re - flect your light. Might - y God of all cre -



round us, we shall raise our songs to you. God of day - break,
 won - der, love that warms the wea - ry soul, love that bursts all
 a - tion, gen - tle Christ who lights our way, lov - ing Spir - it



God of shad - ows, come and light our hearts a - new.
 chains a - sun - der, set us free and make us whole.
 of sal - va - tion, lead us on to end - less day.

* GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

C: **And also, with you.**

P: With-us God, in the time of Moses, you spoke through water in the desert and a pillar of smoke. In the time of the judges, you spoke through the prophets. In the time of Herod, you spoke through angel choruses and unlikely miracles. In every time you have been speaking. So today, in our time, we ask that you would speak again. Break through the chatter and the distraction of our weary minds and speak to us once more. With hope we pray,

C: **Amen.**

ANTHEM

WORD

FIRST READING: LAMENTATIONS 3:55-57

I called on your name, O Lord, from the depths of the pit; you heard my plea, "Do not close your ear to my cry for help, but give me relief!" You came near when I called on you; you said, "Do not fear!"

A: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 130

*GRADUAL HYMN

Refrain
All (melody)
(harmony)

With all my be - ing I wait for
you, O God, and in your word I place my
hope, and in your word I place my hope.

unis. *To Verses* *Last time*

Verses
Leader or Assistant

1. Out of the depths I cry to you, O God: O
2. If you, O God, should mark our sins, O
3. I wait for God, with all my heart I wait. In God's
God, hear my voice. Let your ears be o - pen to the
God, who could stand? But in you is for-give-ness, so that
word is my hope. My soul is wait - ing more than
sound of my cries for mer - cy.
we can, with rev - 'rence, serve you.
those who watch for morn - ing.

D.C.

***GOSPEL**

P: The Holy Gospel, according to St. Luke, the 1st chapter beginning with the 5th verse.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

**WAKE, AWAKE, FOR NIGHT IS FLYING
(NEXT PAGE)**

ELW 436

Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying



1 Wake, a - wake, for night is fly - ing, the watch-men
2 Zi - on hears the watch-men sing - ing, and all her
3 Glo - ri - a! Let heav'n a - dore you! Let saints and



on the heights are cry - ing; a - wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, at last.
heart with joy is spring-ing. She wakes, she ris - es from her gloom.
an - gels sing be - fore you, with harp and cym-bal's clear-est tone.



Mid - night hears the wel - come voice - es, and at the
Her dear friend comes down, all glo - rious, the strong in
Gates of pearl, twelve por - tals gleam - ing, lead us to



thrill-ing cry re - joic - es: "Come forth, you maid-ens! Night is past.
grace, in truth vic - to - rious: her star is ris'n; her light is come.
bliss be - yond all dream - ing, with an - gel choirs a - round your throne.



The bride - groom comes! A - wake; your lamps with glad - ness take!"
Now come, O Bless - ed One, Lord Je - sus, God's own Son.
No eye has caught the light, no ear the thun-d'ring might



Al - le - lu - ia! Rise and pre - pare the feast to share;
Sing ho - san - na! Oh, hear the call! Come one, come all,
of such glo - ry. There we will go: what joy we'll know!



go, meet the bride - groom, who draws near.
and fol - low to the ban - quet hall.
There sweet de - light will ev - er flow.

Text: Philipp Nicolai, 1556–1608; tr. composite
Music: WACHET AUF, Philipp Nicolai
Text © 1999 Augsburg Fortress

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AND AS YOU ARE ABLE

***APOSTLES CREED**

P: Let us now confess our faith using the words of the Apostles' Creed:

C: **I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead; on the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

A: Inbreaking God, every time we read the story of Zechariah in the temple, we remember that you are a God that draws near. You are a God that breaks into the messy middle of our lives to offer hope, love, and good news. You are a God who sees our fears and offers words of comfort. So once more, present God, we bow our heads. Once more we quiet the racing thoughts in our minds. Once more we allow our spirits to lean toward you like trees in the wind. And as we do, we bring you our prayers.

God, today we are grateful for the many amazing things in this world that leave us speechless.

Thank you for the beauty of nature as we welcome a new season.

Thank you for the contagious joy of children.

Thank you for homemade meals and the kindness of strangers.

Thank you for music that buoys our spirits, and scripture that points to your presence.

It can be hard to put into words how grateful we truly are.

However, in addition to prayers of gratitude, gracious God, we also bring you prayers of grief.

We know that Zechariah and Elizabeth were no strangers to grief or longing.

We know that for years they prayed for a child that never came.

So this morning we also pray for those, who like them, have longed for children and found grief instead.

God, we lift up the members of this community who have walked similar journeys of infertility.

We pray for those who lie in hospital beds, desperate for good news.

We pray for those who cannot put food on the table and wonder how they'll keep the lights on.

We pray for children that feel overlooked, and for adults that feel heartbreakingly alone.

God, the hurt and longing in this world is enough to leave us speechless. So just as you did for Zechariah, speak to us.

Remind us that we are not alone and that our prayers have been heard.

We commend these and all our prayers to you, O God, trusting that you are always with us; in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

C: Amen.

PEACE

P: The Peace of Christ be with you always.


C: And also, with you.

P: Let us share God's peace with each other now.

MEAL

OFFERING AND SETTING THE TABLE

***OFFERTORY ANTHEM**



1 Ac - cept, O Lord, the gifts we bring to
2 The vines were plant - ed, seeds were sown. They
3 Our hopes and dreams, our toils and cares we

place up - on your ta - ble. We do not wor - ship
grew in your good plea-sure. What once was com - mon,
lift in prayer be - fore you. Lord, by your grace now

as we ought but on - ly as we're a - ble.
dai - ly food be - comes a ho - ly trea - sure.
come to us, as hum - bly we a - dore you.

*STAND AS YOU ARE ABLE

***OFFERING PRAYER**

A: Let us pray.

C: **Risen One, you have gathered us around your table of grace along with these gifts we bring. Come among us again, breathe your life into us, and enliven us with this meal, that we may live as your risen body in the world. Amen.**

***GREAT THANKSGIVING**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

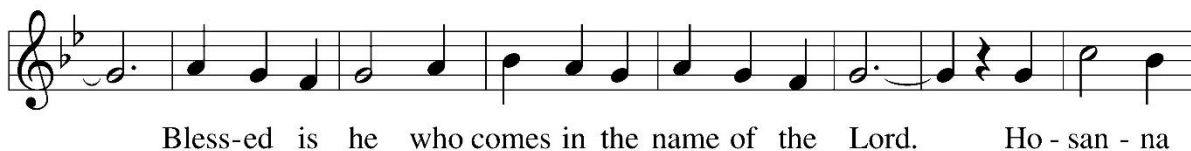
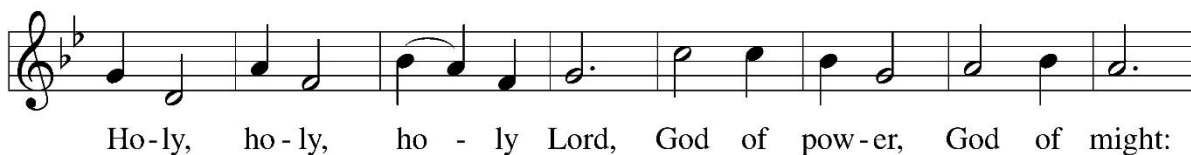
C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

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

C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

***THE PROPER 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 comforted 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:



*STAND AS YOU ARE ABLE

Words of Institution

P: 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.

And as you do, and as we wait, we will join our voices together to pray the prayer your son taught us to pray, saying. . .

C: **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: There is no need for fear here, for this is a joyful feast. And you are invited. Come. All are welcome.

COMMUNION MUSIC

1 O Lamb of God, to earth you came to
2 O Lamb of God, the on - ly Son, to

save us all from grief and shame. Shorn of your life, up -
us show mer - cy, Ho - ly One. You save the world from

on the tree you hung in deep hu - mil - i - ty.
all its sin. Lord, give to us your peace. A - men.

*STAND AS YOU ARE ABLE

Each Winter As the Year Grows Older



1 Each win - ter as the year grows old - er, we each grow old - er,
 2 When race and class cry out for trea - son, when si - rens call for
 3 Yet I be - lieve be - yond be - liev - ing that life can spring from
 4 So e - ven as the sun is turn - ing to jour - ney to the
 5 O Child of ec - sta - sy and sor - rows, O Prince of peace and



too. The chill sets in a lit - tle cold - er; the
 war, they o - ver - shout the voice of rea - son and
 death, that growth can flow - er from our griev - ing, that
 north, the liv - ing flame, in se - cret burn - ing, can
 pain, bright - en to - day's world by to - mor - row's, re -



ver - i - ties we knew seem shak - en and un - true.
 scream till we ig - nore all we held dear be - fore.
 we can catch our breath and turn trans - fixed by faith.
 kin - dle on the earth and bring God's love to birth.
 new our lives a - gain; Lord Je - sus, come and reign!

Text: William Gay, b. 1920, alt.
 Music: CAROL OF HOPE, Annabeth Gay, b. 1925
 Text and music © 1971 United Church Press.

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*PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

P: And now may this, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, strengthen and keep you in his grace forever.

C: **Amen.**

A: Loving God, In a world racked with fear, you gather us together. You set the table. You meet us here. You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits. You remind us that this is a joyful feast, and that fear cannot win every time. So with renewed courage, with renewed hope, with renewed conviction, send us out into the world. Help us to feed others as you have fed us. With gratitude we pray,

C: **Amen.**

*STAND AS YOU ARE ABLE

SENDING

***BLESSING**

P: In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit. May you reach for each other's hands. May you choose courage whenever you can. And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear. In the name of the one who calls, the one who sends, and the one who journeys with— go in peace and be not afraid.

C: **Amen.**

***SENDING HYMN**

REJOICE, REJOICE, BELIEVERS
(NEXT PAGE)

ELW 244

DISMISSAL

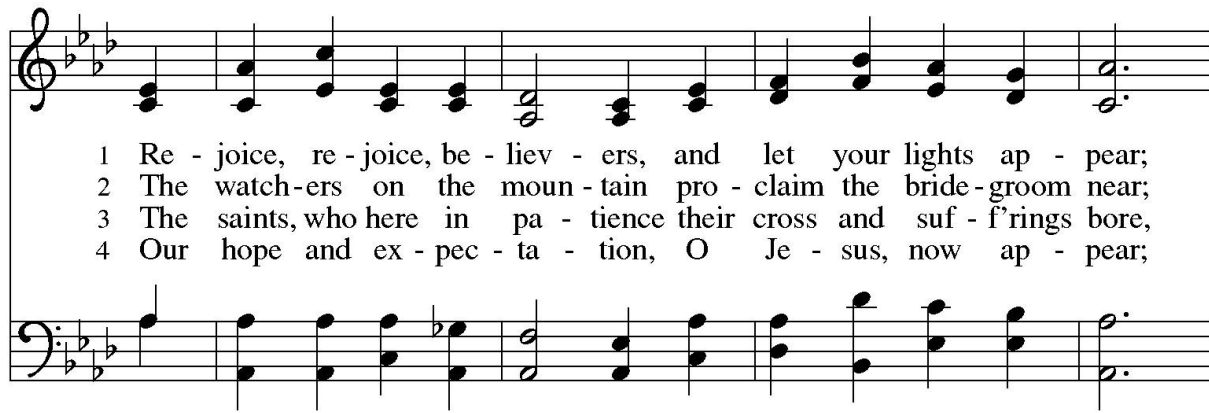
A: Go in peace. Follow Jesus.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

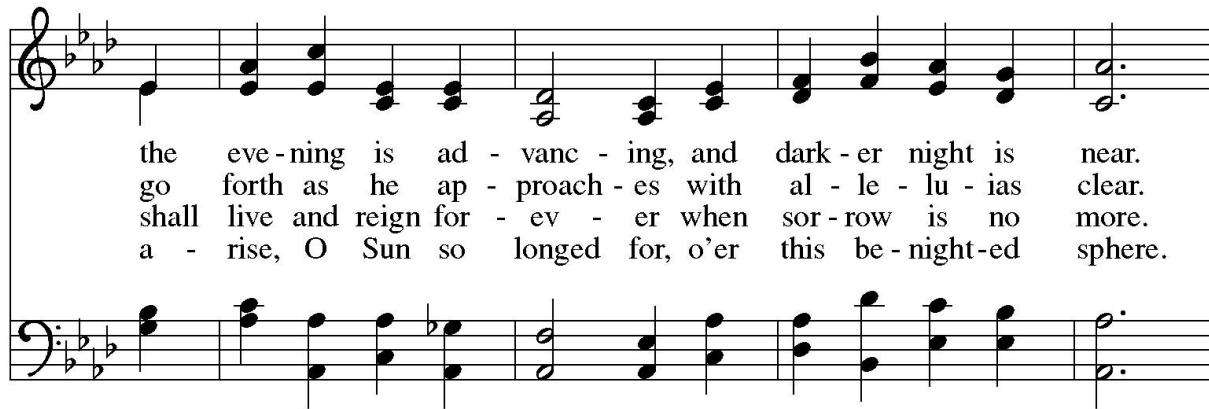
POSTLUDE



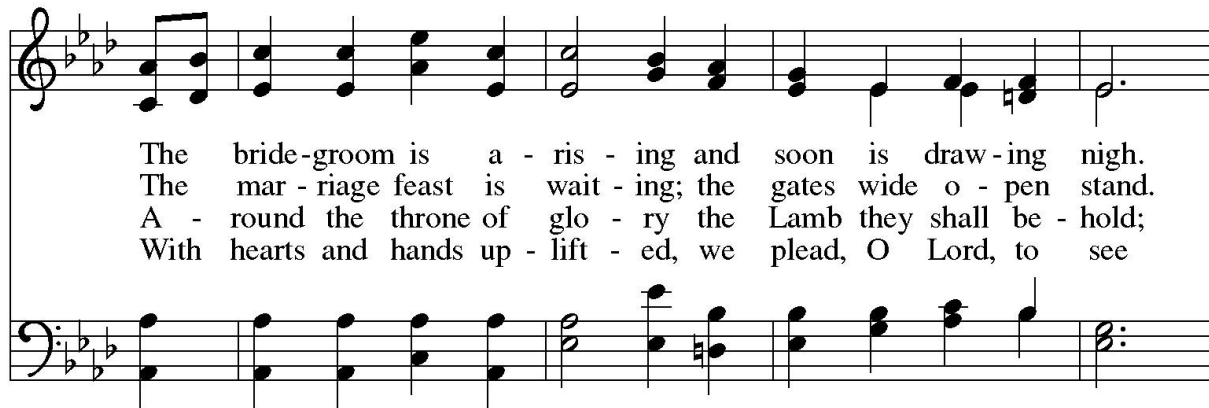
Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers



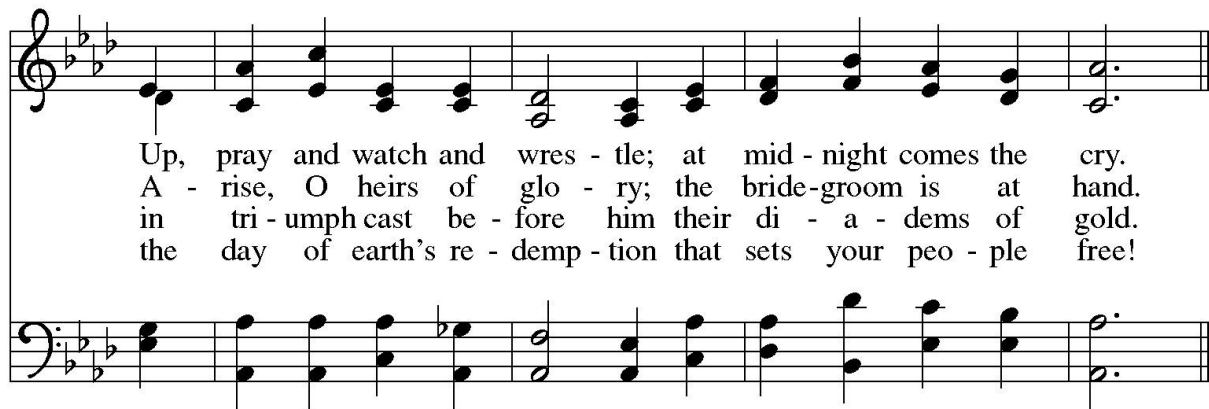
1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
2 The watch-ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride-groom near;
3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'ings bore,
4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.
shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.
a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night-ed sphere.



The bride-groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride-groom is at hand.
in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907
Music: HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG, Swedish folk tune

*STAND AS YOU ARE ABLE

Announcements

WE PRAY FOR...

- Rosemary Rizzo - Tony Rizzo - Erin Jankowski -
- Dee Marinov - Diane Busdiecker - Elaine Wolffer -
- Brian Freeburg - Maryann and Chip Orlando -

George Troester - Son of Maureen Sieteski
Maya Chakraborty
Katherine Sikorski
Brooke: Great-niece of Annette Berg
Angela Roeser
Emily - Niece of Patty Walker
Frank Senn - Brother of Nancy Noble
Janice Darveau - Friend of Kathy Busdiecker
Katherine L - mother of Kathy Habermehl
Pete & Gayle Ciralo - Vince Ciralo's cousin

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Caroling: Dec, 12th, 6:00 PM

Children's Pageant: Dec. 14th

Lessons & Carols: Dec. 21st

Blue Christmas Worship:
Dec. 21st 6:30 PM

Christmas by Candlelight:
Wednesday, December 24, 2025
6:00 PM & 11:00 PM

Christmas Worship & Brunch:
Thursday, December 25, 2025
11:00 AM

ANGEL TREE:

Our Angel Tree project this year will once again be collecting school supplies as well as hats, mittens, and scarves for the children at School #74 in Buffalo. If you are able to donate school supplies, suggestions include (but are not limited to) pencils, pens, crayons, markers, erasers, pencil sharpeners, glue sticks, children's scissors, and notebooks. If donating hats, scarves, or mittens, keep in mind the children range from ages 4-13 years. Please DO NOT GIFT WRAP your donations. Donations can be placed in the labeled boxes in the foyer outside the church office



SCAN HERE FOR ST. PAUL'S DONATION PAGE



ST. PAUL'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Acknowledgments

KYRIE

Text: Beth Bergeron Folkemer, based on the Kyrie
Music: African American spiritualText © 1990,
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CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Text: Greek hymn, 3rd cent., para. Marty Haugen,
b. 1950

Music: Marty Haugen

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THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: Marty Haugen

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OFFERING

Text: Beth Bergeron Folkemer

Music: Appalachian traditional; Barb'ry Ellen
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RITE OF MARRIAGE

Music: Mass of Creation, Marty Haugen, b. 1950

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AGNUS DEI

Text: Beth Bergeron Folkemer

Music: Appalachian traditional;

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COVER IMAGE: PAUL OMEN



What do
you fear?

IN THE TIME OF HEROD, WE
LONG FOR GOD TO BREAK IN



In the Time of Herod

I didn't live during Herod's time—that brutal, murderous king, God save his soul.

But even hundreds of years later, I know the prayers of his people.

I know the prayers of the mothers and the children under his rule.

I know the prayers of the young men under his angry arm.

I know their prayers, because anyone who has ever lived in this soft world for more than two days knows how to pray for a miracle.

We rub our hands together.

We fold weary shoulders in, a cage of bone to protect our bleeding hearts.

We sing, we shall overcome and bind my wandering heart to thee.

We walk across bridges and in front of powerful buildings.

We cover our cars in stickers that scream, we will not give up!

We allow a hungry cry to slip from our lips, giving our lament a life of its own (with room to dance!).

And when all of that is said and done, we whisper to our creator,

God, break through the yelling and the fear. Break through the violence and the oppression.

Get past the Herods of this world, and come be here.

Like every bleeding heart before, we pray for a miracle.

PASTOR ASHLIN MARCHESE

PREACHER/PRESIDER

PATRICK GARD

ORGANIST

DAVE NUZZO

LITURGICAL ASSISTANT

KIM BROWN

COMMUNION ASSISTANT

TBA

USHERS

CINDY SIKORSKI

ALTAR GUILD