



ST PAUL
PINE GROVE MILLS

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 21, 2025

WELCOME TO SAINT PAUL!

We are happy to have you here!

HOW TO KNOW WHEN TO STAND, SIT, OR SPEAK

Whenever you see an asterisk (*) at a heading, you are invited to stand as you are able. You are not required to stand, so if, for health or emotional reasons you cannot or do not wish to stand, that is okay.

You are invited to speak the words printed in **bold type**.

HOW TO SING HYMNS IN HARMONY

To save space in printing the bulletin, we usually limit what is printed to the melody. If you'd like to sing in harmony, the hymn numbers are listed in our bulletin so you can open the red books in the pews (called ELWs).

WE ARE AN OPEN COMMUNION CONGREGATION

This means that any Christian who has received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism is invited to receive Holy Communion.

HOW TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT US



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.

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 intolerance 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.

GATHERING

The Gathering for worship began when you started readying yourself for worship

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

PRELUDE – *Out of consideration for our musicians, please refrain from talking during the prelude.*

***CONFESS AND FORGIVENESS**

P: In the name of the Father, and of the \div Son, and of the Holy Spirit. A: Amen.

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

P Long-expected God, A: **we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.**

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 \div Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **A: Amen.**

*GATHERING HYMN "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

(ELW 265)

1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
 2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
 3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
 4 Of her, Em-man - u - el, the Christ, was born

with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
 all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
 "To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.
 in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,

"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
 thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
 "My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
 and Chris-tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say:

most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."
 most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!
 Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,
 "Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924

Music: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE, Basque carol

*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.

1 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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **A: Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 7:10-16

Jerusalem is surrounded by its enemies, and it seems that utter defeat, followed by the horrors of being sacked, is inevitable. Isaiah, however, promises that by the time a royal princess, now pregnant, gives birth and the child is weaned, the armies will have melted away.

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." ¹³ Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

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

PSALM: 80: 1-7, 17-19

(chanted- tone 3)

This psalm expresses the fears of Isaiah's audience and hints at Isaiah's reassurance.

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;
 shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.
² In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh,
 stir up your strength and | come to help us.
³ Restore | us, O God;
 let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
⁴ O Lord | God of hosts,
 how long will your anger fume when your | people pray?
⁵ You have fed them with the | bread of tears;
 you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.
⁶ You have made us the derision | of our neighbors,
 and our enemies laugh | us to scorn.
⁷ Restore us, O | God of hosts;
 let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
¹⁷ Let your hand be upon the one at | your right hand,
 the one you have made so strong | for yourself.
¹⁸ And so will we never turn a- | way from you;

give us life, that we may call up- ¹ on your name.

¹⁹ Restore us, O Lord ¹ God of hosts;

let your face shine upon us, and we ¹ shall be saved.

SECOND READING: ROMANS 1:1-7

Paul doesn't know the Christians in Rome but is being taken there under arrest. He begins his letter to them with a summary of the Christmas and Easter Gospel. "Grace" and "peace" were the first century equivalents of "Dear Sir or Madam," but Paul fills this formula with profound meaning

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

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!

The virgin shall conceive and bear a son,

Repeat alleluias

and they shall name him Emmanuel

*GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 1:18-25

Matthew begins his Gospel with Jesus' family tree and then moves immediately to this story of his birth. At its center is a key to Matthew's message throughout the Gospel – Jesus is "God with us." Indeed, Matthew's Gospel will end with Jesus promising, "I will be with you always, to the close of the age.

P: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the first chapter.

A: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now 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 pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But 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. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

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

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

SERMON

*HYMN OF THE DAY "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!"

(ELW 257)

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*

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*

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*

8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

*INVITATION TO BAPTISM

*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.**

*Or, "who proceeds from the Father." The phrase "and the Son" is a later addition to the creed.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

L: In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

L: The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

L: You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

L: When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill (*especially*). God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

L: Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service, especially Sheldon Corl and Jean Anderson. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. God of grace,

A: hear our prayer.

L: Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

A: Amen.

***PEACE**

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

MEAL

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING

*OFFERTORY: "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah vs.4"

(ELW 240)



4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954

Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune

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*OFFERING PRAYER

L: Let us pray: Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. **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.

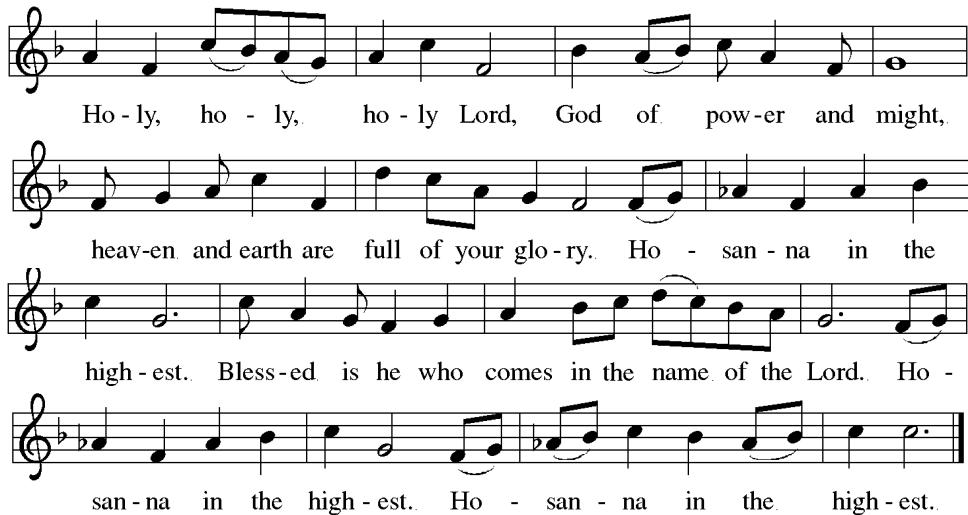
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*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:

*SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,
heav-en. and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na in the
high - est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est.. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*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.

Together we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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.**

Our Father in heaven,

**hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into time of trial,
but deliver us from evil.**

For the kingdom, the power,

**and the glory are yours
forever and ever. Amen.**

*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

*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.

COMMUNION

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

COMMUNION HYMN: "In the Bleak Midwinter"

(ELW 294)

1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
 2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;
 3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?

earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
 heav'n and earth shall flee a-way when he comes to reign;
 If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;

snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
 if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;

in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
 the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
 yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830–1894

Music: CRANHAM, Gustav Holst, 1874–1934

*POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you, body, mind, and soul, now, and unto eternal life. **A: Amen**

*POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE – *Nunc Dimitis (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. God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. **A: Amen.**

SENDING

*SENDING OF COMMUNION

The Pastor prays a prayer for members to bring communion to fellow Christian siblings who could not attend worship this morning.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

You may be seated.

*CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE

*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: "Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers"

(ELW 244)



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.



- 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'ring bore,
- 4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



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

*DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace. Keep awake.

A: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

The poinsettias decorating the sanctuary are given to the Glory of God in honor or memory of the following...

In memory of Edward and Helen Magnuson—by Karen Magnuson

In memory of Herbert and Grace Williams—by Roger Williams

In memory of June and Paul Bird—by Eleanor Bird

In memory of our parents—by Ann and Art Reede

In memory of our parents—by Cinda and Paul Johnson

In memory of our parents—by Joe and Delorse Homan

In memory of Tom and Norma Telenko—by Jen and Jacob Heller

In memory of Bill and Linda Heller—by Jen and Jacob Heller

In memory of Dr. Anthony Leach—by Jen and Jacob Heller

In honor of my wife Marilyn Niemann—by Lloyd Niemann

In memory of my parents—by Edna McCauley

In memory of our parents—by Ron and Debbie Strouse

In memory of Merle Neff—by Katie Neff

In honor and memory of St. Paul musicians—by Michelle McMullen

In memory of Jim Rearick—by Michelle McMullen

In memory of my parents—by Michelle McMullen

In honor of Michelle McMullen—by Joe and Delorse Homan

In memory of Fred and Freda Muthler—by Jeff and Linda Muthler

In memory of Ted and Diane Kemmerer—by Jeff and Linda Muthler

In honor of my mother Martha Hummel and in memory of my father Malcolm Hummel
—by Morgen Hummel

In memory of my husband Malcolm Hummel—by Martha Hummel

If you purchased a poinsettia, you may take it home after the Christmas Eve Service.



SERVING TODAY

Presiding Minister.....	Pastor Paul Tomkiel
Assisting Minister.....	Lauren Tingle
Musician.....	Michelle McMullen
Sacristan.....	Delorse Homan
Reader.....	Jeff Muthler

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 Conestoga-Susquehannock people, where we gather. 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.

Find out more about the Conestoga-Susquehannock at www.conestogasusquehannocktribe.com

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