



**Sunday, December 22, 2024
9:00 a.m.**

Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church

It is a joy to gather together for worship!

St. Paul Purpose Statement

Living Christ centered lives so we may love all, serve our community, and share the Word.

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. In-person worship with Holy Communion

10:00 a.m. In-person Sunday School – September – May

Communion

We celebrate Jesus' presence each week in Holy Communion. This is the Lord's Supper and Jesus invites us: whether you are a lifelong Lutheran, or just considering Christianity; if you are an infant or elderly; if your family has been in the United States for generations, or has only recently arrived; if you are LGBTQIA+ or straight; if you live with disabilities, chronic illness, or are able-bodied and currently healthy; if you are home-blessed or homeless; ... YOU are welcome at God's meal of grace at St. Paul.

Accessibility

Handicap parking, entrance, wheelchair, and restrooms are available. Sound amplifiers and large print bulletins are available. Please ask an usher for assistance.

Children's Offering

The December children's offering will be for the God's Global Barnyard through the ELCA Good Gifts. A gift to God's Global Barnyard will be used where needed most to support livestock, agriculture and other sustainable-development projects, which help farmers and families with the resources they need to thrive.

Prelude

"We Are the Reason"

Words and Music by David Meece; Arranged by Ken Barker

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

Thomas Helmore, based on a 13th-century Plainsong; Arranged by Lloyd Larson

Welcome/Announcements

GATHER

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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

All: Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

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. God of might, we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises. God in our midst, we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us. A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through † Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.

All: Amen.

1701 16th Ave. Sterling, IL 61081

815-625-3069

Church email: stpaulsterling@comcast.net

www.stpaulsterling.com

GREETING

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

All: And also with you.

Gathering Hymn

“Now the Heavens Start to Whisper”



1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.
2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to drift a - way.
3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis - dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in:
Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness shines the hope of com - ing day.
come to bless with fire and fra - grance hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need.



seed of prom - ise, deep - ly plant - ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!
Christ, the morn - ing star of splen - dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim.
In the lone - ly, in the strang - er, in the out - cast, hid from view;



Like the soil be - neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.
Heav - en's em - ber fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come him.
Child who comes to grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come you.

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953
Music: SŪO GĀN, Welsh melody
Text © 2006 GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray together:

All: **Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen**

First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4

¹ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' 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.

R: Word of God, Word of Life,

All: **Thanks be to God.**

“Canticle of the Turning”

ELW #723

1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .
3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
4 Though the na - tions rage from . . . age to age, we re -

God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
work great . . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
mem - ber who holds us fast; God's mer - cy must de -

won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . . from his throne.
liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.

You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
The hun - gry poor shall . . . weep no more, for the
This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the

weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be

name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

Refrain
My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.

Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat.
Music: STAR OF COUNTY DOWN, Irish traditional.
Text © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638, www.giamusic.com, 800.442.3358.
All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Advent Alleluia

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Gospel: Luke 3:1-6

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 3rd chapter

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, 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, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as 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.

⁵Every 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;

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

P: The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath*

Family: Today we will light the fourth candle in our Advent wreath. Before we do that, we remember God's blessings, symbolized by the candles of hope, peace and joy.

(Light the first three candles again.)

Family: The fourth candle helps us to remember that God is love.

(Light the fourth candle.)

All: The Bible tells us that the greatest blessing is love. It is because God loved the world so much that Jesus came to share God's love. Mary sings her song in praise of God's love and goodness. Because God loves us, we must love and care for others.

Family: This candle reminds us to share our love with others through words and actions.

All: Loving God, thank you for expressing your love through the life of Jesus, through our lives, and the lives of those around us. Help us to remember that your love will never end. Amen.

* from the Moravian Church in America

Advent Song

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, and or - der all things
3 O come, O come, O bright and morn - ing star, and bring us com - fort
4 O come, De - sire of Na - tions bind all peo - ples in one



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
far and nigh: to us the path of know - ledge to show,
fr - om a - far! Dis - pel the sh - a - dows in the night.
he - art and mind; bid en - vy strife and qu - arrels cease;



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
and teach us in her wa - ys to go. Re-joice! Re-joice!
and turn our dark-ness in - to light.
fill the whole world with hea - - ns peace.



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

Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.
from Moravian Church in America

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

“Emmanuel”

Sing twice

Em - man - u - el, Em - man - u - el,
his name is called Em - man - u - el;
God with us, re - vealed in us;
his name is called Em - man - u - el.

Text and music: Bob McGee
Text and music © 1976 C. A. Music

Prayers of Intercession

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

Each petition ends with these words:

P: Merciful God,

All: receive our prayer.

Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

All: And also with you!

P: Let us share a sign of Christ’s peace in whatever way you are comfortable.

MEAL

Offering

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

Traditional French Melody; Arranged by Lloyd Larson

Offering Prayer

P: 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.

All: Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

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

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

Words of Institution

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

P: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

P: 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.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

P: 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.

All; Come, Holy Spirit.

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

All: Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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

All: 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: Behold, God is making all things new. Take your place in the new creation.

Communion

Communion Music

"Jesus, Name Above All Names"

Sing through twice

Je - sus, name a - bove all names, beau - ti - ful
Sav - ior, glo - ri - ous Lord,
Em - man - u - el, God is with us,
bless - ed Re - deem - er, liv - ing Word.

The musical score is written on four staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 12/8. The lyrics are placed below the notes. The first staff contains the first line of lyrics, the second and third staves contain the second and third lines, and the fourth staff contains the final line. There are various musical notations including quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests.

Text and music: Patricia Cain
Text and music © 1974 Scripture in Song, a division of Integrity Music, Inc.

"Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head"

Traditional Spiritual; Arranged by Kurt Kaiser

Prayer after Communion

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace.

All: Amen.

P: 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.

All: Amen

Blessing

God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, † bless and keep you now and forever.

All: Amen.

Sending Song

“Soon and Very Soon”

ELW #439



1 Soon and ver - y soon
2 No more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,
3 No more dy - in' there,
4 Soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon
no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,
no more dy - in' there,
soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon
no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,
no more dy - in' there,
soon and ver - y soon



Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, we're goin' to see the King!

Coda after stanza 4



Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu -



jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah.

Text: Andraé Crouch, b. 1945

Music: VERY SOON, Andraé Crouch

Text and music © 1976 Bud John Songs, Inc./Crouch Music, admin. EMI Christian Music Publishing

Dismissal

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

“Masters in This Hall”

Traditional English Carol; Arranged by Lloyd Larson

We Remember in Prayer; those on our Home Visitation list and those on our prayer list: Steven Julifs, Phyllis Jacobson, JoAnn Garcia, Barb Lenn, Lori Dewey, Betty Steinke, Michael Harting, Larry Wahler, JoDell Cruz, Sandy Julifs, and Lila Edeus.

Worship Assistants:

Presider: Pastor Susan Davenport

Opener – Gabby Law

Closer – David Carrillo

Head Usher – Stacey Avelar

Advent Readers – Platz family

Acolytes – Platz family

Greeters – Audrey & Cathy Cox

Ushers – Jim Gorman, Donna Kendall

Reader – Jim Gorman

Sound – David Carrillo

Musicians:

Lori Attig

Julie Woessner

Christmas Eve Worship – 8:00 p.m.

Presider: Pastor Kathy Burkheimer

Opener/Head Usher/Closer – David Carrillo

Advent Readers – *Volunteer needed*

Acolytes – *Volunteer needed*

Greeters – Jim Gorman, *Volunteer Needed*

Ushers – Jim Gorman, Greg Zeigler

Sound – Greg Zeigler

Altar Guild – Debbie O'Brien, Diane Yoeckel

Next week – December 29

Lessons and Carols

Opener/Head Usher/Closer – David Carrillo

Acolytes – Arians family

Greeters/Ushers/Readers – Keith Peugh, Greg Zeigler

Sound – Bradyn Arians

Coffee Fellowship – Cox family

From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.