Part of the ministry we share includes providing a worship space that gives glory to God. Especially in this, one of our highest festival occasions, we decorate with particular detail. Thanks to the following people for the donation of poinsettias, a symbol of the season:

Pat Glafka in memory of James Glafka, Paul and Ono Andersen

Jerry & Khe Crofts in memory of Heather Crofts

John Renner in memory of Julie Renner and parents, Ronald & Julia

Dianne Stern Miller in honor and in memory of all families

Leta VanZuiden in memory of Merwyn VanZuiden, Harry & Ann Landheer, Richard Landheer

Nancy Beck in memory of loved ones

Ron & Janie Billings in memory of our parents

Gary Fields in memory of Marcia Fields

Bob & Judy Bartel & family; Dave & Donna Kendall & family in memory of Ruth & Don Stern and Mabel Rohde

Jim & Cheryl Gorman in memory of Geraldine Chismarick, Bob & Shirley Gorman **Sharon & Dale Worley** in memory of our parents

Verges & Noreen Aageson & family in memory of Ken & Miriam Chubb, Dr. Carl & Minna Wiederanders

Sandra Julifs in memory of Harold Julifs

Sandra Julifs in memory of Steven Julifs

Julie Randy DeJonge in memory of Bob Woessner, Bob Wasmund, & Rhonda DeJonge

Patty & Mark Arians in memory of our parents; Mary & John Doty, Vernon Johnson, Marv & Betty Arians

Ron & Karol Gerken in memory of Lisa Gerken Lee

Jeff & Jul, Jacy & family, Jennifer, and Jessica Woodworth in memory of son and brother, Jacob Woodworth

Shirley Dodd in memory grandson, Jacob Woodworth

Debbie Riggins in memory of Ed & Barb Hussung, Harry & Winnie Riggins

Audrey & Cathy Cox in memory of Dick, Harold, Hazel & Bob Cox

Mike & Debbie O'Brien in memory of Rocky Hasbrouck, Jim Herzing

Greg & Dawn Zeigler in memory of parents, Charles Steinke and Sandra Zeigler

Ann Beswick in memory of Loren Beswick, Bob & Lila Gomsrud

Ann Beswick in memory of Ruthie T. Loud, Ted, Tom & Marion Beswick

If you ordered a poinsettia and would like to take it home, you may do so following the worship service.



Sunday, December 28, 2025 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 10:15 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 ablebodied 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 with 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.

Pastor Mark Luepke, Part-time Interim pastormark@stpaulsterling.com 1701 16th Ave. Sterling, IL 61081 815-625-3069 Church email: stpaulsterling@comcast.net

Jnurch email: stpaulsterling@comcast.ne
www.stpaulsterling.com

From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

First Sunday of Christmas

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the "holy innocents" of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

Prelude

"Angels From the Realms of Glory/Emmanuel"

Words and music by James Montgomery and Henry Smart, Paul Baloche, Michael Rossback and Brenton Brown

Arranged by John Cumberland

Welcome/Announcements

P: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, One God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace.

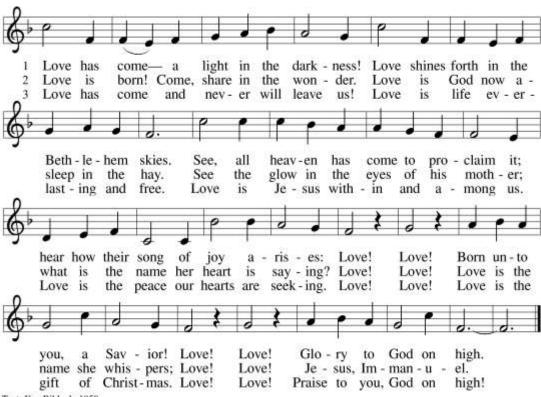
All: Amen



Carol

"Love Has Come"

ELW #292



Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950

Music: UN FLAMBEAU, F. Seguin, Recueil de noëls composés en langue provençale, 1856 Text © 1996 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (ASCAP), c/o Integrity Media, Inc., 1000 Cody Road, Mobile, AL 36695.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray together:

All: O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LESSONS AND CAROLS

Carol

"Your Little Ones, Dear Lord"



Text: Hans A. Brorson, 1694–1764; tr. Harriet Krauth Spaeth, 1845–1925, alt. Music: HER KOMMER DINE ARME SMÅ, Johann A. P. Schulz, 1747–1800

FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:7-9

songs re - new, and

⁷I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

praise you

gels

do.

⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not act deceitfully," and he became their savior

⁹ in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

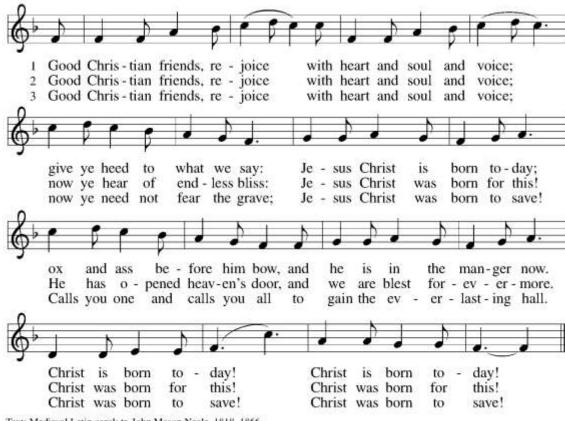
R: Word of God, word of life,

All: Thanks be to God

Carol

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

ELW #288



Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866 Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.

SECOND READING: Psalm 148

R: ¹ Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights! ² Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!

All: ³ Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars! ⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the heavens!

R: ⁵Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created. ⁶He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

All: ⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, ⁸ fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!

R: ⁹ Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! ¹⁰ Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

All: ¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! ¹² Young men and women alike, old and young together!

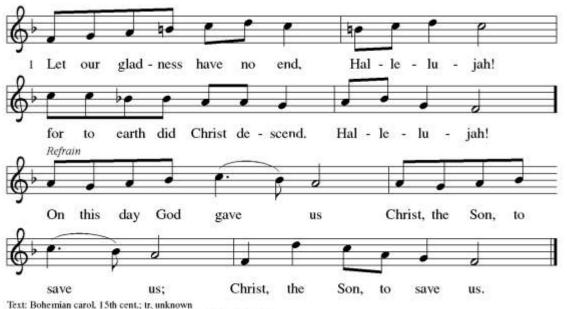
R: ¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven. ¹⁴ He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him.

All: Praise the LORD!

Gospel Acclamation

"Let Our Gladness Have No End"

ELW #291 verse 1 only



Music: NARODIL SE KRISTUS PAN, Bohemian carol, 15th cent.

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 2nd chapter.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³ Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

¹⁹When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

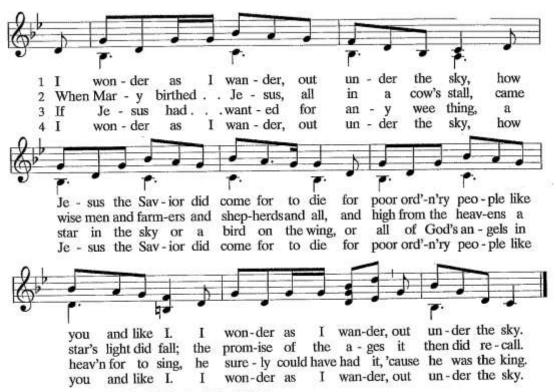
P: The Gospel of the Lord,

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children's Message

Sermon "Christmas in the Real World"

Hymn of the Day "I Wonder as I Wander"



Text: Appelachian carol, collected by John Jacob Niles, 1892–1980 Music: Appelachian folk tune, adapt. John Jacob Niles, 1892–1980 et 1934 (renewed) G. Schimer, Inc. (ASCAP)

Prayers of Intercession

P: Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

P: Hear us O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

P: With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

All: Amen.

Peace

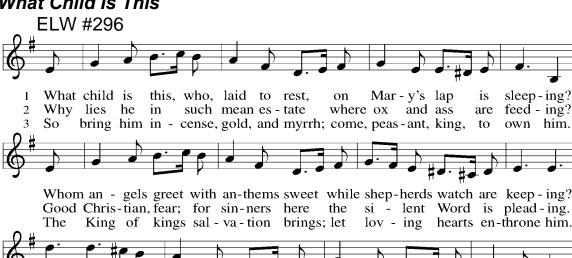
P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

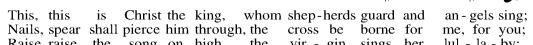
All: And also with you!

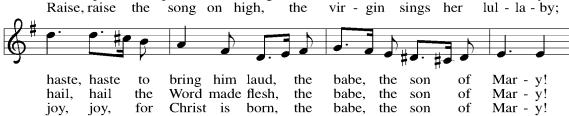
P: Let us share a sign of Christ's peace in whatever way you are comfortable.

Offering

"What Child Is This







Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent

Offering Prayer

P: God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior.

All: Amen.

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

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: God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

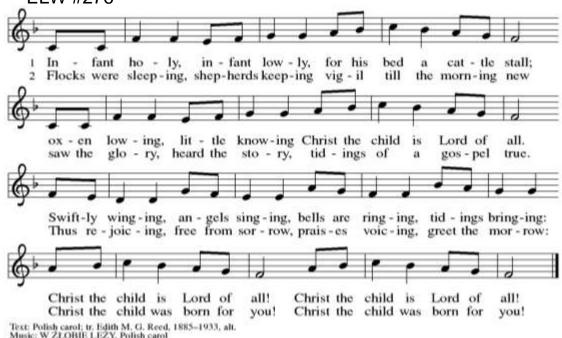
Communion

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" By Anna Laura Page

Communion Music

"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

ELW #276



"I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve"

ELW #271



o - pens now for ev - 'ry child the pal - ace of the

and that he loves me ev - 'ry day I know so well is

Text: Marie Wexelsen, 1832-1911; tr. Peter A. Sveeggen, 1881-1959

Music: JEG ER SÅ GLAD, Peder Knudsen, 1819–1863 Text © 1932 Augsburg Publishing House

"Lo, how a Rose E'er Blooming"



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.

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

All: Amen.

P: I invite you to rise in body or spirit to receive a blessing.

Blessing

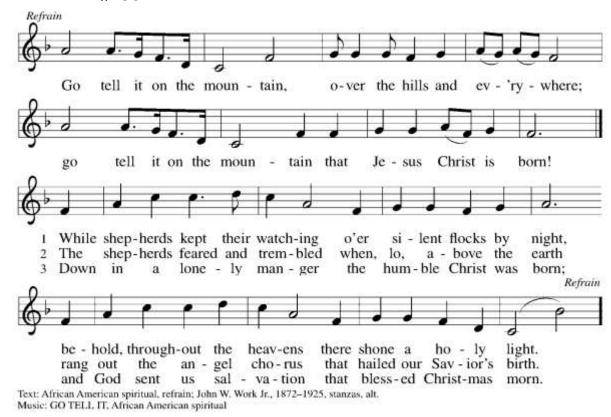
P: The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, + bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

All: Amen.

Sending Song

"Go Tell It on the Mountain"

ELW #290



Dismissal

P: Glory to God in the highest! And peace to God's people on earth! Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

All: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

"He Shall Reign Forevermore"

Words and Music by Chris Tomlin and Matt Maher
Arranged by Larry Shackley

We Remember in Prayer; those hospitalized this week: Ron Billings; those on our Home Visitation list and those on our prayer list: Lori Dewey, Maggie N., John Renner, the Woodworth family, Michelle Klinger, Pastor Bree, Matt Friel, Sandy Julifs, Mike, Dylan Wescott, Phyllis Jacobson, and Betty Steinke

Worship Assistants:

Opener/Head Usher/Closer – Mary Ordean Acolytes – Ordean family Greeters/Ushers – Dan Dir, Gary Fields, Keith Peugh Reader – Keith Peugh Sound – Bradyn Arians Communion Assistant – Janie Billings Altar Guild – Debbie O'Brien, Diane Yoeckel Coffee Fellowship – Volunteer Needed

Musicians:

Lori Attig Julie Woessner DeJonge

Next Week – January 4 Worship Assistants

Opener/Head Usher/Closer – Greg Zeigler

Acolytes – Altar Guild

Greeters - Susan Kuehl, Bev Graunke

Ushers – Nancy Beck, Donna Kendall

Reader – Greg Zeigler

Sound – David Carrillo

Communion Assistant – Nancy Beck

Altar Guild - Judy Bartel, Donna Kendall

Coffee Fellowship - Volunteer Needed