

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

P. O. Box 267, 201 Veterans Dr., Columbus, TX 78934

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November 26 & 27, 2022

First Sunday of Advent

Senior Pastor	Alan Kethan	<u>Home:</u> (979)-942-9060	<u>Cell:</u> (830)-708-1200
Deacon of Word and Service			Sandye Fletcher
Youth & Family Specialist			Stephanie Polasek
Music Minister			Robert Eaton
Congregational Chair			Donna Maas
St. Paul Christian Learning Academy Director			Briana Bedford
Secretary			Elena Holub
Custodian			Tomasa Rosales
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator			DyAnn Lauzon
Organist			Joan Hunsicker

MISSION STATEMENT: Love God, Love Neighbor (*Luke 10:27*)

VISION STATEMENT: We will work to strengthen and grow closer in relationship to God and to one another.

- *As we enter into a sacred time and space, a friendly reminder to please set your cell phone to vibrate.*
- ***We want to welcome all of our guests today and thank you for worshiping with us. If you have any questions or would like more information regarding our services, programs, day care, or preschool programs at St. Paul, please visit our Welcome Center in the narthex immediately following our service, and an attendant will be more than happy to assist you. If this is your first time at St. Paul, we hope you will take a gift along with you. We also have a gift bag for children.***

* This symbol indicates that the congregation is invited to stand physically or in spirit.

INTRODUCTION

The new church year begins with a wake-up call: Christ is coming soon! In today's readings both Paul and Jesus challenge us to wake from sleep, for we know neither the day nor hour of the Lord's coming. Isaiah proclaims the day when God will gather all people on the holy mountain and there will be no more war or suffering. Though we vigilantly watch for the promised day of salvation, we wait for what we already have: Christ comes among us this day as the word and meal that strengthens our faith in the promises of God.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE PADS

(Ushers will be handing out Attendance Pads during the announcements. Please be sure to sign your name and contact information.)

LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH

* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

C Blessed be God's name forever. Amen.

P Let us confront our sins, and confess them to the one who is merciful and just, first privately then together publicly.

Silence for reflection and private confession of personal sins, then join in with combined voices this printed confession.

P God of new beginnings,

C we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign. We have strayed from your paths. We dishonor one another and your creation. Purify us with your refining fire and set us again on your way of love, that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance, and welcome your coming among us. Amen.

P People of God, a new thing is growing in our midst, a tender branch, a living sign. By water and the Spirit you are joined to this wonder. You have put on ☩ Christ, and your sins have been washed away. Rejoice in the way of the Lord.

C Amen.

* **HYMN ELW - #259 "Fling Wide the Door"**

1. **Fling wide the door, unbar the gate; the King of glory comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the Savior of the world who brings his great salvation to the earth. So raise a shout of holy mirth and praise our God and Lord, Creator, Spirit, Word.**

2. **He is the rock of our belief, the heart of mercy's gentle self. His kingly crown is holiness; his scepter is his loveliness; he brings our sorrows to an end. Now gladly praise our king and friend, and worship him with song for saving us from wrong.**

3. **Oh, happy towns and blessed lands that live by their true king's commands. And blessed be the hearts he rules, the humble places where he dwells. He is the rightful Son of bliss who fills our lives and makes us his, creator of the world, our only strength for good.**

4. **Come, Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ; our hearts are open wide in trust. Oh, show us now your lovely grace, upon our sorrows shine your face, and let your Holy Spirit guide our journey in your grace so wide. We praise your holy name, from age to age the same!**

Text: Georg Weissel, 15909-1635; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943
Music: Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen, *Geistreiches Gesangbuch*, 1704; arr. hymnal version
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress

* **GREETING**

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.**

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 2:1-5

A Our first reading is from Isaiah, chapter 2, verses 1-5. *The visionary message presented in this reading focuses on a future day when God establishes a universal reign of peace. Divine decisions will make war obsolete, and the worshipping community responds: "Let us walk in the light of that Lord now!"*

The reading begins:

¹The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ²In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. ³Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. ⁵O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 122

A The Psalm today is Psalm 122. We will read the Psalm responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

¹I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

²**Now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.**

³Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity with itself;

⁴**to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, the assembly of Israel, to praise the name of the LORD.**

⁵For there are the thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

⁶**Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you.**

⁷Peace be within your walls and quietness within your towers.

⁸**For the sake of my kindred and companions, I pray for your prosperity.**

⁹Because of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek to do you good."

SECOND READING: Romans 13:11-14

A Our second reading is from Romans, chapter 13, verses 11-14.

Paul compares the advent of Christ to the coming of dawn. We live our lives today in light of Christ's coming in the future.

The reading begins:

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep.

For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

A Please stand as you are comfortable for the gospel.

* **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** (Sung)



* **GOSPEL:** Matthew 24:36-44

Jesus describes his second coming as a sudden, turbulent event that will bring about deep change to our normal, day-to-day lives. Therefore, he urges people to stay awake, be aware, and wait expectantly, because the Son of Man will come unannounced.

P The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 24, verses 36-44.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples,] ³⁶“About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴²Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* **HYMN ELW - #244 “Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers”**

- 1. Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear;
the evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The bridegroom is arising and soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry.**
- 2. The watchers on the mountain proclaim the bridegroom near;
go forth as he approaches with alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting; the gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory; the bridegroom is at hand.**
- 3. The saints, who here in patience their cross and suff'rings bore,
shall live and reign forever when sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory the Lamb they shall behold;
in triumph cast before him their diadems of gold.**

- 4. Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
arise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!**

Text: Laurentius; tr. Sarah B. Findlater

Music: Swedish folk tune

* **APOSTLES' CREED**

A With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

C I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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, he 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 the life everlasting. Amen.**

(The congregation may be seated during the prayers.)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

A brief silence.

A God of peace, you judge the nations. Beat our weapons into tools for serving the neighbor. Strengthen the resolve of all who work for an end to war. We pray for lasting peace in the land of Jesus' birth. God, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A God of refuge and strength, we pray for peace in Ukraine. Help to end this war and the destruction of lives and your creation. Change hearts, bring peace and show the world your existence. God, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A Heavenly God, we pray for the family and friends of Coleman Nalls. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time. God, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A Merciful God, we pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including: baby from Peru; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you (*Pause*). God, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A God of strength, we pray for all those battling cancer that they may know comfort and strength. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)* God, in your mercy, Larry Stolar; Bob Stiles; Vivian Fortenberry; Rick Davis; Edna Bergfeld; Mack Machacek; Hines Harrison; Darryl Stancik; Jerry Ordner; Michael Yancey; Bubba Bencal; Al Gene Canik; Jane Venghaus Taylor; George Wright; Elrose Kollatschny; Sarah Stancik; Sandy Mosley; Charlene Tesch; Cynthia Coufal; Jeffrey McDaniel; Karen Bailiff; Julian Divin; Nancy Biers; Angie Beggs; Pam Potter; Charlie Hammock; Brad Bryson; Lynette Frnka; Riana Jamison; Jenna Escamilla; Margaret Ortiz; Keith Korth; Jodi Sebesta; Cathy Siglow; Paul Casinger; Fran Gillett; Tiffany Murley; DeQuincy Lister; Angela Mazoch; Lily Presswood; Denise Lange; Doug Mason; Dr. Tom Hancher; Joe Berry; Gracie Brune; Margaret Rogers; Leonard Kahlden; Curtis Wallin; Megan Burch; Lisa Grazier; Phyllis Behrend; Jessica Mauchlen; Donna Tiner; Libby Divin; Diane Brooks; Bob Loy; Stanley King; Monty Gillett; Dawn Foster; Edward Halcolm; Amber Smith Kutach; Louis Camacho; Melvin Schobel; Janet Greene; Sabrina Galindo; Debbie Grimes; Horst Traub; Margie Fisk; Preston Carter; Penny Miller; Carl Hahn; Megan Cain; Amanda Fuchs; Cyndi Wallace; Karen Broussard; Donna Young; Sharon Heimann; and Brenda Baker.

C hear our prayer.

A God of life, we pray for all expectant mothers, and especially for: Jessica Johnson; Ashley Dungen; Magen Schindler Altieri; Katie Pagel Walcik; and Kelsey Kethan McNeely that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace. God, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A Loving God, we pray for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound and especially for: Barry Shepard; Paul Minar, Sr.; Bobby Zajicek; Stan Lawson; John W. Brasher; Lydia Rojas; Adrian Fritsch; Don Morrison; Verna Coufal; Doug Hill; John Zwiengel; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Deanna Lee; Barbara McMath; Linda Munos Rodgers; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Delores Purcell; Jane Booker; Curtis Berger; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmer; and Donna Dehmer that they receive your caring and compassion. God, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A God of courage, we pray for all law enforcement officers, fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers, 9-1-1 dispatchers, and active duty military personnel that they are protected and kept safe. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)* God, in your mercy, Law enforcement officers: Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abbigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Luke Kanz; Bruno Flores; Zane Weido; Josh Jones; as well as Donnie Templeton and Jason Templeton who are also fire fighters. For all fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers and 9-1-1 dispatchers, especially Brent Gorman, Sr.; Brent Gorman, Jr.; Reid Brasher; Dusty Dittmar; John Maertz; Ron Luedke; Pastor Alan Kethan; Kristi Weyand; Eric Weyand; Bradley Berger; Jon Berger; James Chollett; Edward Thraen, Jr.; Garrett Flores; Kyle Burris; Dylan Walcik; Randy Wendt;

Travis Neuendorff; Brenda Henkes; and Jan Willette, as well as those active duty military members including Brian Anderson; Michael Graham; Bryan Kubena; Brad Bergfeld; Cody Jowers; Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Ryan Neisner; Anthony D'Angelo; Dalton Kapel; Kindra Dawson; William Phillips; and Kevin Gonzalez.

C hear our prayer.

A God of mission, we pray for the church throughout the world. May we all proclaim the good news of your love effectively. We ask, especially, that you would bless the ministry of our sister congregations Cristo Rey and Iglesia Cristiana Camino de Santidad in Peru, all Missionaries, especially St. Paul's supported missionary, Dina Anton de Espinoza, and our companion synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic. God, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray.

C Amen.

* **PEACE**

P The peace of the risen Lord be with you always.

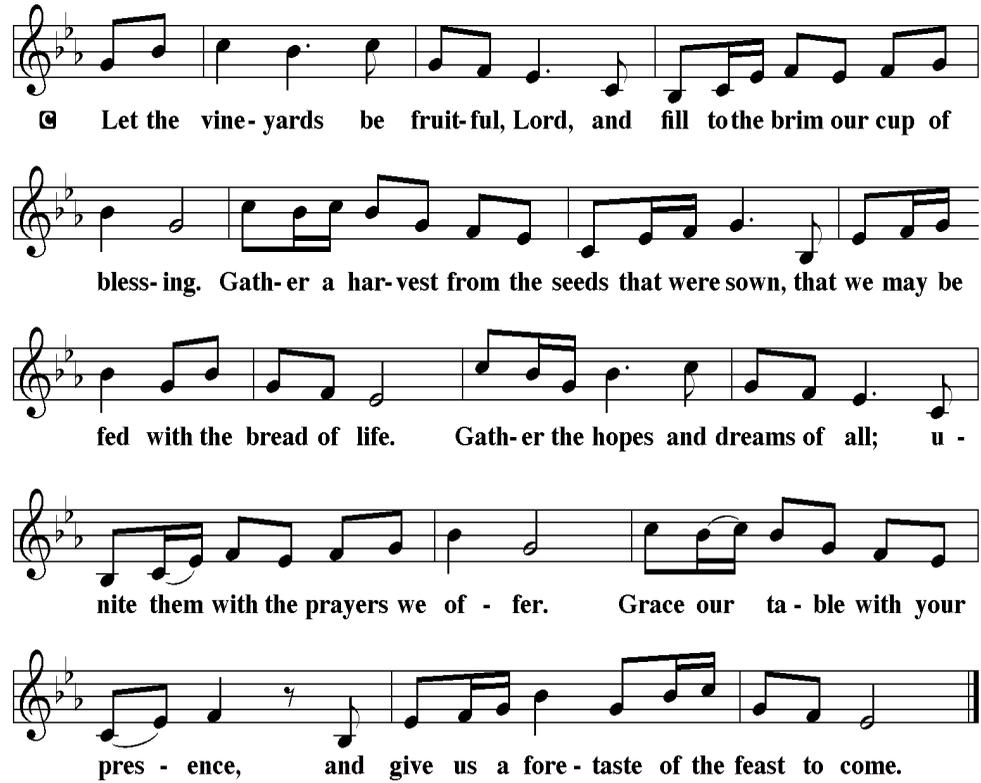
C And also with you. *(Share the "Peace of the Lord" with your neighbors.)*

(We will be collecting offerings before and after worship each week. This includes Power of One dollars.)

OFFERING and POWER OF ONE

"Power of One" is a ministry sponsored by your Stewardship Team. We are asking each and every one of our members to give \$1.00 above what your normal giving would be. We are asking each member to place this \$1.00 bill or change in the offering plate each week. The team is also inviting all children to participate to develop the habit of giving as part of their worship experience. Parents, a penny, nickel, dime, quarter, or dollar bill, any of these will do to help your children develop a habit of giving. These "Power of One" dollars will be used to support local ministries and ministries abroad. The purpose of this ministry is to demonstrate that something as small as one dollar can be used to make a difference in the lives of others.

* OFFERTORY (Sung)



C Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

* OFFERING PRAYER

P Eternal God, you make the desert bloom and send springs of water to thirsty ground. Receive these simple gifts of bread, wine, and money, and make us messengers of your mercy and love for all in need of your healing and justice. We ask this through Christ our Savior.

C Amen.

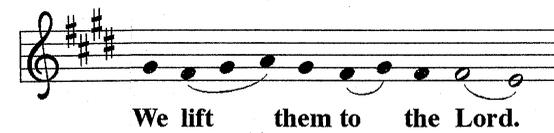
* GREAT THANKSGIVING (Responses Sung)

P The Lord be with you.



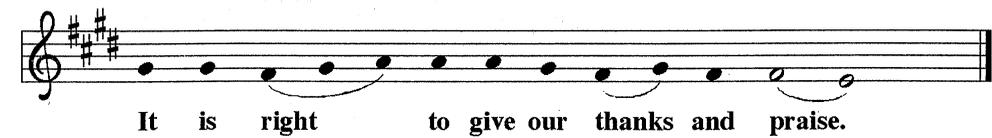
And al - so with you.

P Lift up your hearts.



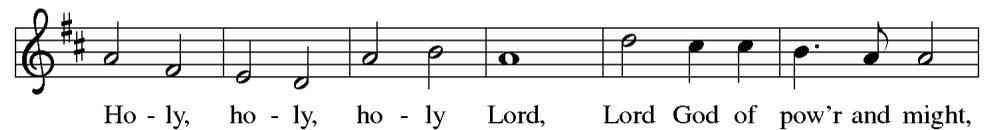
We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

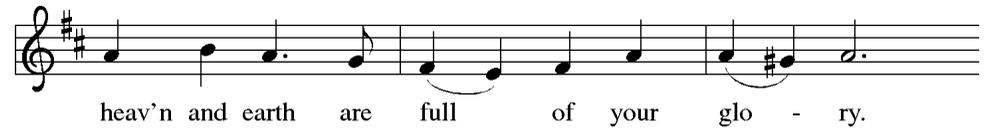


It is right to give our thanks and praise.

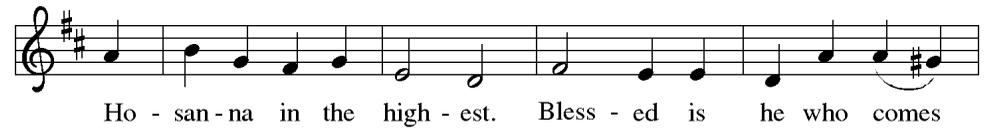
P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



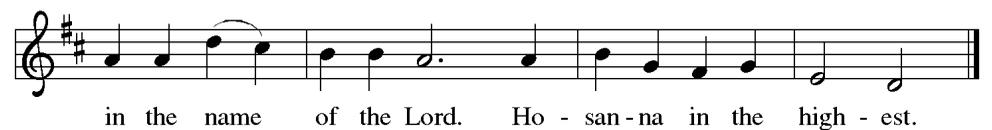
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n 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.

* **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

* **LORD'S PRAYER**

P Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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 Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God, who has come to save you.

C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION (Continuous with Individual Cups)

{Distribution will be continuous. All are welcome for communion. Please come down the center aisle starting from the front. Follow directions of the ushers, coming up one side at a time. Pastor will hand you the bread. If you wish to have a gluten-free wafer, please tell Pastor "Gluten-free, please." Afterward, you will choose either wine or white grape juice from the individual cups in the tray – white grape juice in the center with wine surrounding. Place the empty cups in the baskets located off to the side. Although communion is continuous, you are welcome to kneel at the rail in prayer after receiving communion. Please return to your seat by the side aisles.}

* **BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION**

P Now may the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C Amen.

* **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P Faithful God, in this meal you have remembered your mercy, bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ. As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery. Guide us toward your promised future, coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

* **BLESSING**

P God the eternal Word, who dwells with us in Jesus, and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit, ☩ bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

* **HYMN ELW - #246 "Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding"**

1. **Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding! "Christ is near," we hear it say.
"Cast away the works of darkness, all you children of the day!"**

2. **Wakened by the solemn warning, from earth's bondage let us rise;
Christ, our sun, all sloth dispelling, shines upon the morning skies.**

3. **See the Lamb, so long expected, come with pardon down from heav'n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow, one and all, to be forgiv'n;**

4. **So, when next he comes in glory and the world is wrapped in fear,
he will shield us with his mercy and with words of love draw near.**

5. **Honor, glory, might, and blessing to the Father and the Son
with the everlasting Spirit while unedning ages run!**

CCLI Song #1436177 Words: Latin hymn, 1632; tr. Edward Caswall Music: William Henry Monk
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* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Christ is near.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

POSTLUDE

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USHERS: SAT: The Brent Gorman Family

SUN: Sonny & Tiffany Lauzon; Cambry Barten

LAY READERS: SAT: Pastor John Hunsicker

SUN: Tiffany Lauzon

ACOLYTE:

SUN: Tucker Stancik

STREAMING:

SUN: Mark Lighthill

SOUND: Robert & Sydney Eaton

ALTAR GUILD: Gloria Ilse and Charleen Andrus

WELCOME: Today is the first Sunday of Advent and a new church year. Welcome to this rich season of worship.

ALTAR FLOWERS are placed by Lee Goebel in thanks for God's blessings, for his church family and for 56 years of life as he celebrates his birthday November 28.

COLLECTION OF OFFERING: Offering for the worship services is collected before and after worship. Offering bowls are placed in the back entrance and inside the side sanctuary door for you to place your offering in. This includes "Power of One" dollars.

Amount needed for average weekly budgeted expenses: \$8,405.00

Attendance: Nov. 19 & 20, 2022 – 158 **Contributions:** Nov. 19 & 20 – \$5,625.61
Power of One: Nov. 19 & 20, 2022 – \$44.00 **Building Fund:** Nov. 19 & 20 – \$441.44

Thank you to those who contributed to last week's offerings. Loving God/Loving Neighbor.

ATTENTION: *Names on the prayer list in the bulletin will be printed for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, the names will be removed from the bulletin unless the church office has been notified to keep them.*

► **Children's Activity Bags** are available once again for use by our young members and guests! You can find them on the coat hooks in the coat area of the narthex. After worship, **please place the used activity bags and their contents in the receptacle in the narthex.** Thank you! ☺

♥ **Meals to Heal:** Our next Meals to Heal **cook session** will be **Monday, November 28, 2022 at 4:00 PM** in our St. Paul Lighthouse kitchen. We want to stock our freezer before the busy holiday season. We will be making two main dish casseroles, bagging veggies, bagging cookies and finally assembling meals to go in the freezer. Questions? Contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127.



If you are interested in placing **Poinsettias** in church for Christmas or donating money for decorations, please fill out the enclosed form! **Turn in your completed form to the church office by Monday, December 5, 2022!! If you purchase your own poinsettia, please bring it to the church Friday, December 16, 2022.** We ask that you do not bring it any earlier since there will not be any place to store the poinsettias because of the Christmas program. Extra forms will be available in the church office and the narthex (foyer) if you need one for yourself or someone you know.

++ FAMILY ADVENT READINGS: Families are encouraged to sign up for the **Family Advent Litany Reading and Candle Lighting** that will take place at the beginning of services during Advent. A family will come forward to read the Litany and light the candle for that particular Sunday in Advent. If your family is interested, **please sign up on the sign-up sheet in the narthex.** A different family is needed for each service. **The remaining dates and times are:** Sat., Dec. 3 at 7:00 PM; Sun., Dec. 4 at 9:00 AM; Sun., Dec. 4 at 11:05 AM; Sat., Dec. 10 at 7:00 PM; Sun., Dec. 11 at 9:00 AM; Sun., Dec. 11 at 11:05 AM; Sat. Dec. 17 at 7:00 PM; Sun., Dec. 18 at 9:00 AM; and Sun. Dec. 18 at 11:05 AM. A copy of the reading will be sent to you.

Columbus Food Pantry: It is time for our church to help at the Columbus Food Pantry! The dates are **December 15 & 16, 2022.** The Food Pantry is located at the First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 419 Washington Street. On **Thursday, December 15** the food delivery

truck will arrive and grocery bags will be prepared; **please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help. **On Friday, December 16 the food will be distributed** 9:00 AM-1:00 PM. **Please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help with the food distribution. Please mark your calendars to help with this important community service! If you have any questions, please call Kathy Fleming at 979-732-4930 or Tom Fleming at 979-732-4107.

► The St. Paul Quilters will **not be meeting the remainder of this year.** They will be taking a well-deserved holiday break! They will **resume quilting** the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month beginning **Tuesday, January 10, 2023.**

The **Noon Bible Study group** that meets on Tuesdays will be taking a fall/holiday break and **will not be meeting the remainder of this year.** Be sure to mark your calendar for *Tuesday, January 10, 2023* which is when they will *resume class.* Everyone is invited to attend. Have a blessed holiday season, and see you next year!



Peru Happenings: There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex (foyer) for anyone interested in going on our **Peru mission trip** in July, 2023. This is not a firm commitment to go to Peru. We are trying to get an idea of people who are interested in going. Our **tentative dates are July 22-31, 2023.** We have a drive-thru dinner fundraiser planned for Tuesday, January 10, 2023. (More info to come in the near future.) **Our next Peru Team meeting is Thursday, December 8, 2022 at 6:30 PM in the church library.** We would love to have you join us and hear about our plans for Peru! – *Peru Team*

**** Church Council Nominations:** If you are interested in serving on the Church Council, please **email a brief bio of yourself** to Elena Holub at admin@splctx.org by **Wednesday, December 14, 2022.** Your bio should include, but not be limited to, how long you have been a member of St. Paul, ministry teams you have served on, the reason you want to serve and a brief background description. If you have any questions, please contact John Brasher, David Johnson, Sandi Roensch, DyAnn Lauzon or Curtiss Schonenberg. ******



The Mowing Team is looking for more people to help mow the interior church lawn. Typically it takes an hour and a half, or less, to mow and edge. Please call John Brasher at 979-253-1448 if you are interested or if you have any questions.



Habitat for Humanity: The Outreach Team is in search of a Team Leader to represent St. Paul Lutheran Church for Habitat for Humanity. The churches in our community coordinate and build a couple of houses a year for our neighbors in need. **We need someone to represent St. Paul and be the liaison between Habitat for Humanity and our congregation.** You do not have to build the house yourself, but help coordinate our efforts. Please let Kevin Page know (979-732-0845) if you are interested or have any questions. Thank you, and thank you, God, for our most generous church family!

♥ **Grief Support Group:** Are you experiencing grief from the loss of a loved one, loss of a job, loss of friend who has moved? The Grief Support Group is a place to share and discuss these issues with other individuals. The group meets the **third Thursday of each month from 5:30-6:30 PM in the church library.** For questions or more information, contact Peggy Geisler at 979-732-0350.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Mon., Nov. 28 – 9:30 AM – Staff Meeting
4:00 PM - Meals to Heal Cook Session (Lighthouse)

Tues., Nov. 29 – 6:00 PM – Lighted Christmas Parade (downtown Columbus)

Wed., Nov. 30 – 9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
5:00 PM – Meal
5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation, Adult Class & HS Youth

Thurs., Dec. 1 – Stephanie to Youth Ministry Network
10:30 AM – Pastor to The Oaks
6:00 PM – Youth & Education Team (library)
6:00 PM – Property Team (choir room)

Fri., Dec. 2 – 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)

Sat., Dec. 3 – 7:00 AM – Men In Mission (Lighthouse)
7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., Dec. 4 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Wednesday, November 30, 2022 Andrew, Apostle

The first of the disciples to be called by Jesus, Andrew quickly began to bring others to the Savior, including Simon Peter. The Bible also shows him leading some Greeks to meet Jesus, and he brought forward the boy with five loaves and two fish, with which Jesus fed thousands.

Saturday, December 3, 2022 Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, died 1552

A native of the Basque region of Spain, Xavier became a missionary to India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and the Philippines. He also helped to found the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

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SERVICE OVERVIEW: WAKE FROM YOUR SLEEP

In today's gospel, Jesus urges us to tune into an alternative to the material world, one he called the coming of the Son of Man. In Jesus' person, the dominion of God comes into the world, and the risen Christ continues to give us abundant signs of its presence. Jesus commands his followers not to drop out of the world, but to be on the lookout for him in it.

Christians await the second coming of Christ when we believe we will experience God's reign in its fullness. In the meantime, we live, in the words of some theologians, "already, but not yet." We look for glimpses of the dominion in the here and now. The season of Advent, and today's readings, are designed to help turn us on to the excitement and anticipation of God's reign in our lives and tune in to the infinite opportunities we have to participate in it. In other words, they want to wake us up!

St. Paul exhorts us in today's second reading to lead lives of faithful obedience until the final day. He also challenges us to participate in God's dominion in the here and now, calling us to wake from sleep, to "put on Christ." Eyes wide open and wrapped in Christ, we are called to a new day. Isaiah describes his own vision: gathered by God, learning and teaching God's ways, walking in God's paths, beating swords into plowshares and spears to pruning hooks. Wide-awake, active, and ready for encounters with Jesus, may we find God's dominion when and where we least expect it!

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

It is the first week of Advent, the beginning of a liturgical year. This year we will study the gospel of Matthew. Welcome to worship! The coming of Christ means the hope of justice, peace, and honorable living. Join us as we hope and pray for such a world as this.

Happy church new year! It is Advent. Today, remember that time is not linear. It is a circle, a spiral. We move forward, and somehow we also return again and again to where we have been before. See the nonlinear, messy timelines of our lives gathered into God's time. Before we leap to the manger, consider what kind of ending this new beginning will be for you. How does it feel to again rest back into the embrace of infinity at this turning of the year?

The world around us has already fully arrived at Christmas. How do we slow ourselves down into the space where we wait? How can we help another person arrive to and appreciate that space? Remember, Advent means we are getting our hearts ready. Would people make a beautiful turkey dinner for friends and then eat it before they arrive? Would a bride, so anxious to show her friends her wedding dress, wear it to the office? It can be a challenge to wait!

In the gospel, Jesus compares the Son of Man to a thief who is coming at an unexpected time. Maybe we should make Advent lists - kind of like Christmas lists, but instead of things we want, write down what we want Christ to take away from us. While reflecting, we can certainly end up in places of pain because looking into the past may result in the weight of regret, shame, and trauma. But remember... we wait for Jesus, not in fear, but hoping he will come and steal everything holding us captive.

Wake from your sleep! Step away from the grinding, work-worn world and immerse yourself in a Christ-filled, contemplative space. We begin our Advent worship naming the journey of getting ready and showing how we wait while the world rushes ahead.

KID STUDY:

This weekend's worship time is very special, because it's the first week of Advent. We have started the countdown to Christmas! There are many things that we do to get ready for Christmas. We will be very busy putting up our Christmas trees, lights, and decorations. We will be busy shopping, going to parties, and visiting family. We will be cooking and baking and cleaning and singing and playing and eating and going and doing and.... *WAIT!* It's not Christmas yet! Advent is the season before Christmas when we slow down. It's hard to be patient. We are so excited, but we have to wait for the Christ child to be born. While we prepare for Christmas, we must also be prepared for when Christ returns. We all know when Christmas is coming, but when will Jesus be back? We don't know. Until that time, we have to prepare by being busy with the things he told us to do - be His hands and feet! Serve your neighbors! We must never forget to love God and love one another no matter what time of the year it is.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

In a religious autobiography entitled Confessions, St. Augustine tells of hearing the singsong chant of a child intoning repeatedly, "Pick it up and read it." Going back to Paul's letters Augustine opened randomly to what we now designate as Romans 13:13: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ," and this Romans passage is designated as our second Bible reading on this Advent Sunday. As the days continue to darken earlier during this season, we are summoned to the light at the end of the Advent tunnel. That light is Christ: chiefly as he is to come in glory at the end, but also, prefigured, as that coming is, by his earthly coming as the Christ of Christmas. But for now, look for the coming one at an hour you do not expect him. - Gerard S. Sloyan [Gerard S. Sloyan, in Homilies for the Christian People, ed. Gail Ramshaw (New York: Pueblo, 1989), 1-2.]

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Next Week's Theme (Dec. 3 & 4): Activity of John the Baptist

Next Week's Scriptures (Dec. 3 & 4):

First Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

"From David's line, a ruler bringing justice and peace."

Psalm: Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

"May the righteous flourish; let there be an abundance of peace." (Ps. 72:7)

Second Reading: Romans 15:4-13

"Live in harmony, welcoming one another."

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

"A voice cries: Prepare the way of the Lord."