

ORDER OF WORSHIP

4TH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

DECEMBER 24, 2023

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

8100 SHADY GROVE RD.
MECHANICSVILLE, VA 23111

SAINTPAUL-LCMS.COM

804.427.7500

LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

Sunday Schedule

Adult Bible Study – 9:15 a.m.

Traditional Worship – 10:30 a.m.

Rev. Rodney E. Bitely, Pastor
Mr. Bill Moats, Choir Director
Mr. Roger Sethmann, Organist
Mr. Eric Burcham, Guest Organist
Mrs. Debbie Harris, Church Secretary

A Word About Communion

We Lutherans believe in the Real Presence, namely that Christ's body and blood are actually present with the bread and wine in a very special way (1 Cor. 10:16). Because we want to honor Christ and to grow closer to Him through this precious gift of forgiveness we practice close communion. Our faith in Christ brings us closer to Him and to each other. This sacrament is His way of keeping us close, that is, in union or communion with Him and fellow Christians. In order to build closeness, please read below before communing.

- ✦ I confess my sins to God and rely on Jesus Christ to save me from them.
- ✦ I believe that Christ is really present in this Sacrament and that with the bread and wine I actually receive His true body and blood.
- ✦ I intend, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to amend my sinful life and live a life that is pleasing to God.



As We Gather

Soon and very soon our waiting and planning for Christmas celebrations will come to their close, and we will rejoice in Christ's coming to save us. Such waiting and planning for Christmas can also guide us as we prepare for Christ's final advent,

His ultimate coming, when He returns on the Last Day. Until that glorious Day, when all portions of God's plan for our salvation will be accomplished, we are blessed with the peace "which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Such peace is an amazing gift that the Lord gave to the virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, when she received God's Word from the angel Gabriel. According to God's own amazing plan, Mary would carry our salvation in her womb and then, some nine months later, deliver Him into the world He would die and rise again to save. "Let it be to me according to your word," she said, accepting the Lord's plan for her life (Luke 1:38). May we say the same today as we gather in the presence of our God.

Key:

- △ – Stand
- Ⓟ – Pastor
- Ⓐ – Assistant/Reader
- Ⓒ – Congregation

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

384 Of the Father's Love Begotten



1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten Ere the worlds be -
 2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, When the vir - gin,
 3 This is He whom seers in old time Chant - ed of with
 4 O ye heights of heav'n, a - dore Him; An - gel hosts, His
 △ 5 Christ, to Thee, with God the Fa - ther, And, O Ho - ly



gan to be, He is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
 full of grace, By the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,
 one ac - cord, Whom the voic - es of the proph - ets
 prais - es sing. Pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore Him
 Ghost, to Thee Hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing



He the source, the end - ing He, Of the things that are, that
 Bore the Sav - ior of our race, And the babe, the world's Re -
 Prom - ised in their faith - ful word. Now He shines, the long - ex -
 And ex - tol our God and King. Let no tongue on earth be
 And un - end - ing prais - es be, Hon - or, glo - ry, and do -



have been, And that fu - ture years shall see
 deem - er, First re - vealed His sa - cred face
 pect - ed; Let cre - a - tion praise its Lord
 si - lent, Ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring
 min - ion, And e - ter - nal vic - to - ry



Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more. A - men.

Text: Aurelius Prudentius Clemens, 348-c. 413; (sts. 1-4); tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-66, alt.; (st. 5); tr. Henry W. Baker, 1821-77
 Tune: Plainsong, 13th cent., mode V
 Text and tune: Public domain

Invocation

Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]

P In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Opening Sentences

Psalm 37:7a, 34a; Isaiah 30:18

P Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him.

C Wait for the LORD and keep His way.

P The LORD waits to be gracious to you.

C He exalts Himself to show mercy to you.

P For the LORD is a God of justice;

C blessed are all those who wait for Him.

Confession & Absolution

1 John 1:8-9; [John 20:19-23]

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Service of the Word

Kyrie

Mark 10:47

- P** O Lord,
C **have mercy.**
P O Christ,
C **have mercy.**
P O Lord,
C **have mercy.**

Introit

Psalm 19:1, 4c, 5-6; antiphon: Isaiah 45:8a, b

- P** Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;
C **let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit.**
P The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
C **In them he has set a tent for the sun,**
P which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
C **and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.**
P Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them,
C **and there is nothing hidden from its heat.**
P Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
C **as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**
P Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;
C **let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit.**

357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

sts. 1, ref. 2-3



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som
 2 O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, Who or - d'rest
 3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy

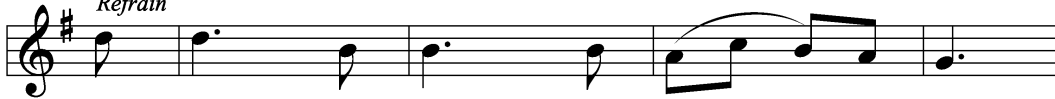


cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly
 all things might - i - ly; To us the path of
 tribes on Si - nai's height In an - cient times didst



ex - ile here Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 knowl - edge show, And teach us in her ways to go.
 give the Law In cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.

Refrain



Re - jice! Re - jice! Em - man - u - el



Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent.; Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, 1710, Köln; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-66, alt.
 Tune: French, 15th cent.
 Text and tune: Public domain

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

P Let us pray... O Lord, let the lighting of these candles signify that You are the light that shines in all the darkness of our lives. As we wait, watch, hope, and pray, guide us all to reflect Your light and let it shine; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

O Dayspring

The Great "O" Antiphon Traditionally Appointed for Dec. 21st

P O Dayspring, splendor of light everlasting:

C Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

(Four candles on the Advent Wreath are lit as the hymn continues.)

357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

sts. ref. 4-7



4 O come, Thou Branch of Jes - se's tree, Free them from
 5 O come, Thou Key of Da - vid, come, And o - pen
 6 O come, Thou Day - spring from on high, And cheer us
 7 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind In one the



Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny That trust Thy might - y
 wide our heav'n - ly home; Make safe the way that
 by Thy draw - ing nigh; Dis - perse the gloom - y
 hearts of all man - kind; Bid Thou our sad di -



pow'r to save, And give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.
 leads on high, And close the path to mis - er - y.
 clouds of night, And death's dark shad - ows put to flight.
 vi - sions cease, And be Thy - self our King of Peace.

Refrain



Re - jice! Re - jice! Em - man - u - el



Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent.; Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, 1710, Köln; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-66, alt.
 Tune: French, 15th cent.
 Text and tune: Public domain

Salutation and Collect of the Day

Advent 4

P The Lord be with you.



C And al - so with you.

P Let us pray... Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



Sit

Old Testament Reading

2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16

“Your throne shall be established forever.”

A The Old Testament Reading is from 2 Samuel, chapter 7.

Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.”

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’ Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. . . .

And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle Reading

Romans 16:25–27

“To the only wise God be glory forevermore.”

A The Epistle is from Romans, chapter 16.

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Choral Anthem- *“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”*

by Carlton R. Young

Stand

Gradual

Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26, alt.

P Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.

C **Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem.**

P Behold, your king is coming to you;

C **righteous and having salvation.**

P Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

C **From the house of the Lord we bless you.**

Holy Gospel

Luke 1:26–38

God reveals His eternal plan of salvation to the virgin Mary.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the

Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

Sit

Children's Message

All children, preschool age through elementary school, are invited to come forward for a special message.

336 Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending

1 Lo! He comes with clouds de - scend - ing,
2 Ev - 'ry eye shall now be - hold Him
3 Those dear to - kens of His pas - sion
4 Yea, a - men, let all a - dore Thee,

Once for ev - 'ry sin - ner slain;
Robed in glo - rious maj - es - ty;
Still His daz - zling bod - y bears,
High on Thine e - ter - nal throne;

Thou - sand thou - sand saints at - tend - ing
Those who set at naught and sold Him,
Cause of end - less ex - ul - ta - tion
Sav - ior, take the pow'r and glo - ry,

Swell the tri - umph of His train:
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
To His ran - somed wor - ship - ers.
Claim the king - dom as Thine own.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
Deep - ly wail - ing, deep - ly wail - ing, deep - ly
With what rap - ture, with what rap - ture, with what
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -

lu - ia! Christ the Lord re - turns to reign.
wail - ing, Shall their true Mes - si - ah see.
rap - ture Gaze we on those glo - rious scars!
lu - ia! Thou shalt reign, and Thou a - lone!

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-88, alt.
Tune: Thomas Olivers, 1725-99
Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon - Luke 1:26-38, "God's Loving Plan"

*"And the angel said to her,
'Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favor with God.
And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you shall call his name Jesus.
He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.
and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,
And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever,
and of his kingdom there will be no end.'"*

Luke 1:30-33

Stand

Apostles' Creed

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life \dagger everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

- P** In the peace of Christ, our coming King, let us bring our prayers before our gracious God... Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- C** Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand.
- P** For God's amazing plan of salvation, that all may know the hope, love, joy, and peace of sins forgiven; for perfect peace to reign in the hearts and minds of all who believe, that we may be the Lord's instruments of peace in a world filled with troubles; in peace, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** Lord, have mercy.
- P** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
- C** will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- P** For the outpouring of the Spirit of peace upon the Church of Christ Jesus, that all who wait for His appearing would be strengthened in their faith and renewed in their boldness to confess His saving name before all the world; for all those who doubt God's plan for their lives, that like the virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit would make His Word come alive in them, transforming them from the inside out; in peace, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** Lord, have mercy.

P Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.

C **Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”**

P For the comfort and peace of Jesus to touch the lives of all who experience suffering, *especially...* ; for Christ’s peace to dwell among us as we celebrate His coming to save us, looking forward to the ultimate Day in which He will come again in all power and glory; in peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P With hearts of gratitude and praise, we join with the hosts of heaven and say:

C **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!”**

(additional petitions may be offered.)

P Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

Sit

Offering

Voluntary

Stand

331 The Advent of Our King

sts. 1, 3, 6



1 The ad - vent of our King Our prayers must now em - ploy,
3 O Zi - on's daugh - ter, rise To meet your low - ly King,
△ 6 All glo - ry to the Son, Who comes to set us free,



And we must hymns of wel - come sing In strains of ho - ly joy.
Nor let your faith - less heart de - spise The peace He comes to bring.
With Fa - ther, Spir - it, ev - er one Through all e - ter - ni - ty.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. John Chandler, 1806–76, alt.
Tune: Aaron Williams, 1731–76
Text and tune: Public domain

Sanctus

Holy Lord

C 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.

Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

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.

The Words of Our Lord

Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

Pax Domini

Peace of the Lord

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.



C A - men.

Agnus Dei

Lamb of God



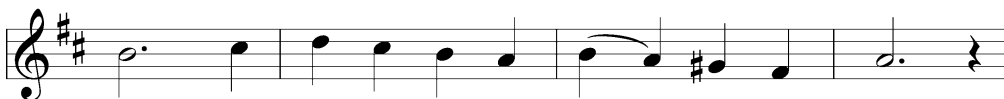
C Lamb of God, You take a - way the sin of the world;



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, grant us peace.

Sit

Distribution

The pastor and those who assist him receive the body and blood of Christ first and then distribute them to those who come to receive, saying:

Take, eat; this is the true body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins.

Amen.

Take, drink; this is the true blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, shed for the forgiveness of your sins.

Amen.

Stand

Thank the Lord

G Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev - 'ry-one what
He has done. Let ev - 'ry-one who seeks the Lord re -
joice and proud - ly bear His name. He re-calls His prom-is-
es and leads His peo - ple forth in joy with shouts of thanks -
giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Post-Communion Collect

- P** Let us pray... We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



Benediction

Numbers 6:24-26

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.



Service Dismissal

- P** Go in peace.
C Serve the Lord!

383 A Great and Mighty Wonder

sts. 1, ref. 2-4



1 A great and might - y won - der, A full and ho - ly cure:
2 The Word be - comes in - car - nate And yet re - mains on high,
3 While thus they sing your Mon - arch, Those bright an - gel - ic bands,
4 Since all He comes to ran - som, By all be He a - dored,



The vir - gin bears the in - fant With vir - gin hon - or pure!
And cher - u - bim sing an - thems To shep - herds from the sky.
Re - joice, O vales and moun - tains, And o - ceans, clap your hands.
The in - fant born in Beth - l'em, The Sav - ior and the Lord.

Refrain



Pro - claim the Sav - ior's birth: "To God on high be



glo - ry And peace to all the earth!"

Text: Germanus, c. 634-c. 734; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-66, alt.
Tune: Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengeseng, 1599, Köln
Text and tune: Public domain

Postlude

Acknowledgments

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Service, 2023-12-17, Advent 3



A Congregation Sharing Christ's Salvation
By Grace...
Through Faith...
Revealed in Scripture...
Alone.