

St. Paul's Lutheran Family, ELCA

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Rev. Paul M. Larson, Pastor



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 1, 2024

SUNDAY 9:00 a.m.

Welcome to St. Paul's Lutheran Family!

How Does a Weary World Rejoice? – We Acknowledge our Weariness

ELW Setting Three

Pastor Paul Larson

GATHERING

PRELUDE: Jesus Is Coming Again by John W. Peterson

INTRODUCTION

Advent is about the “coming days.” God’s people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a “righteous Branch to spring up for David.” The Thessalonians awaited “the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints.” Jesus’ contemporaries hoped for the time “to stand before the Son of Man.” With them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of Christ in word and supper.

WELCOME

The assembly stands.

CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS

P: In today’s scripture passage, a man named Zechariah is given good news from God and his response is to ask, “How can this be?” Have any of you ever felt that way when receiving good news? It can be hard to receive good news when we don’t expect it. It can be hard to accept God’s grace and God’s love when we think we don’t deserve it. But scripture tells us over and over again of a loving, generous, and gracious God. So may we come to the prayer of confession today, not with fear, but with an awe so deep that we ask ourselves, “How can this be?” Let us pray:

C: Gracious God, we are weary. For weary bodies that ache and cry out, we pray: Forgive us for pushing ourselves too hard. Remind us that we deserve Sabbath rest. For weary minds that feel overwhelmed and saturated with news, forgive us for creating so many distractions. Remind us that in the quiet, we can hear you. For weary hearts that long to feel the joy of this season, forgive us for being impatient with ourselves. Remind us that healing takes time, and that joy and grief can coexist. For the weary edges of our faith that struggle to hold onto hope, forgive us. Remind us of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Remind us that your good news knows no bounds. Amen.

P: People of God, no matter how many times we wear ourselves thin, no matter how many times we lose ourselves to distractions, no matter how many times we ask ourselves, "How can this be?" God's love keeps showing up for us. So say this with me:

**C: We are loved. We are claimed. We are forgiven.
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN: Hymn #244, Rejoice, Rejoice Believers – Four verses

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!

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.**

KYRIE

Setting Three, Page 138

P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the
Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of
God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and
praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

CANTICLE

Setting Three, Page 140

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of God.**

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Power, riches, wisdom and strength,
and honor, blessing, and glory are his.**

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Sing with all the people of God,
and join in the hymn of all creation:**

**Blessing, honor, glory, and might
be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.**

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign.

Alleluia.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

PRAYER of the DAY

P: Let us pray,

C: Loving God, the source of our joy, as we turn our hearts toward your Word, we ask that you would soften us. Soften the callouses on our hearts. Weave yourself in between the cracks in our spirits. And plant hope where there is room. And as you do this, like flowers toward the sun, we will turn ourselves toward you,

eager to hear a Word so good that we cannot help but ask ourselves, “How can this be?” With openness and gratitude we pray,
Amen.

WORD

The assembly is seated.

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14-16

In the Old Testament, “righteousness” often has to do with being faithful in relationship. God acts righteously both in punishing Israel for its sin and in having mercy. In today’s reading, Jerusalem’s future name—“The Lord is our righteousness”—proclaims that God is even now working salvation for Israel.

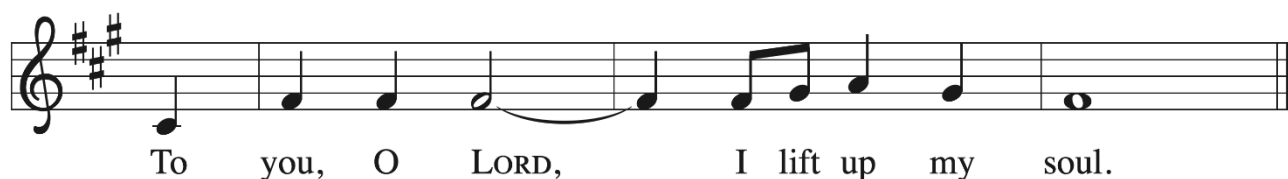
¹⁴ The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.”

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-10, Refrain

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. (Ps. 25:1)

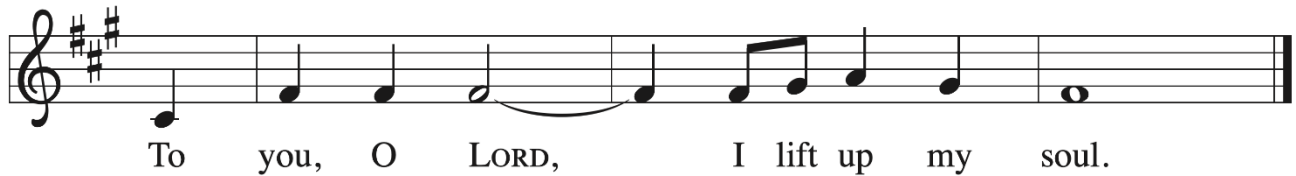


¹ To | you, O LORD,
I lift | up my soul.

² **My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be | put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.**

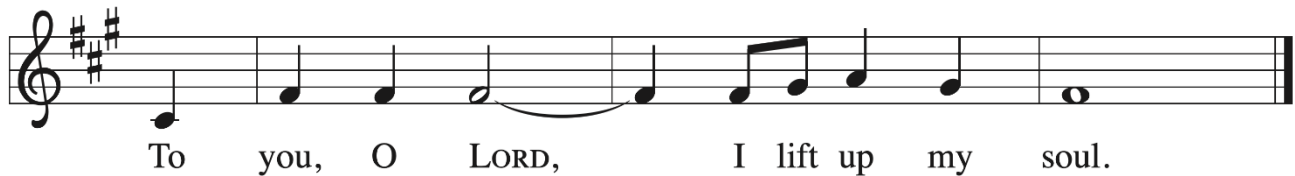
³ Let none who look to you be | put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame | who are treacherous.

⁴ **Show me your | ways, O LORD,
and teach | me your paths. R**



⁵ Lead me in your | truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have | trusted all | the day
long.

⁶ **Remember, O LORD, your compas- | sion and love,
for they are from | everlasting. R**

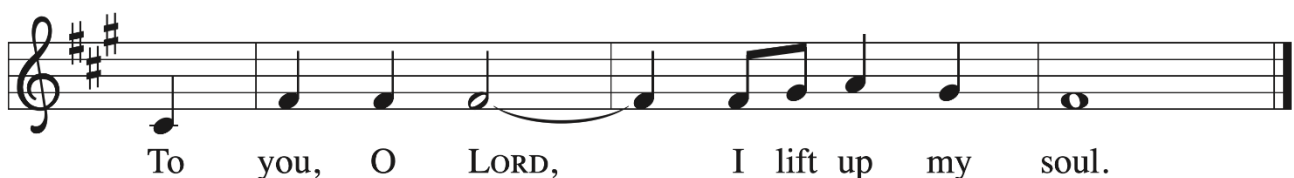


⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your
good- | ness, O LORD.

⁸ **You are gracious and up- | right, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners | in your way.**

⁹ You lead the low- | ly in justice
and teach the low- | ly your way.

¹⁰ **All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast | love and faithfulness
to those who keep your covenant and your | testimonies. R**



SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Upon Timothy's report from the congregation at Thessalonica, Paul is exuberant with gratitude for them. In this passage from his letter, Paul voices overflowing thanks, joy, and blessings for the people of this growing church.

⁹How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? ¹⁰Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

¹¹Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. ¹²And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. ¹³And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Setting Three, Page 142

Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia.

GOSPEL READING: Luke 1:1-23

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

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, ²just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

⁵In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

⁸Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. ¹⁰Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside.

¹¹Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. ¹⁴You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." ¹⁸Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." ¹⁹The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

²¹Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. ²²When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. ²³When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME – Rev. Paul M. Larson

Hymn #240, Light One Candle to Watch for the Messiah

- 1 Light one candle to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He shall bring salvation to Israel,
God fulfills the promise.

SERMON – Rev. Paul M. Larson

The assembly stands.

HYMN of the DAY: Hymn #260, The King Shall Come – Five verses

- 1 The King shall come when morning dawns
and light triumphant breaks,
when beauty gilds the eastern hills
and life to joy awakes.
- 2 Not as of old a little child,
to bear and fight and die,
but crowned with glory like the sun
that lights the morning sky.
- 3 Oh, brighter than the rising morn
when Christ, victorious, rose
and left the lonesome place of death,
despite the rage of foes.
- 4 Oh, brighter than that glorious morn
shall dawn upon our race
the day when Christ in splendor comes,
and we shall see his face.
- 5 The King shall come when morning dawns
and light and beauty brings.
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray:
come quickly, King of kings.

APOSTLES CREED

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.

C: Amen.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

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

A brief silence.

R: God of righteousness, your people live in hopeful expectation of your
coming. Fill your church with renewed passion for our shared mission,
and deepen our relationships with other Christians and other faith
traditions in our local community and across the world. Lord, in your
mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

R: God of the cosmos, all creation shows that your presence is near. Help us sense your goodness and love in the sun and moon, in sprouting leaves and bare branches, in the roaring sea and quiet breeze. Lord, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

R: God of the nations, your reign extends over all principalities and powers. Give leaders and all in authority hearts for justice and peace. Encourage efforts to enact policies that benefit the common good. Lord, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

R: God of change, you accompany us through life's transitions. Be near to all who are changing jobs, moving, welcoming children, or facing the loss of loved ones. Sustain those who are ill or suffering. In times of change, remind us of your steadfast love. Lord, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

R: God of community, your Spirit holds us together. Sustain our care for one another. Inspire us to seek new ways to live together and to embrace the diversity of thought and identity in our communities. Lord, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

R: God of memory, we give you thanks for faithful ones who have died. Tend to our grief and sorrow with renewed trust in your promise of abundant and eternal life. Lord, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

R: Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always

C: And also with you

MEAL

OFFERING

OFFERING HYMN: Hymn #949, Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning – Four verses

1 Keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
for this work's almost done. *Refrain*

Refrain

Children, don't grow weary;
children, don't grow weary;
children, don't grow weary,
for this work's almost done.

2 Darker midnight lies before us,
darker midnight lies before us,
darker midnight lies before us,
for this work's almost done. *Refrain*

Refrain

Children, don't grow weary;
children, don't grow weary;
children, don't grow weary,
for this work's almost done.

3 Lo, the morning soon is breaking,
lo, the morning soon is breaking,
lo, the morning soon is breaking,
for this work's almost done. *Refrain*

Refrain

Children, don't grow weary;
children, don't grow weary;
children, don't grow weary,
for this work's almost done.

4 Keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
for this work's almost done. *Refrain*

Refrain

Children, don't grow weary;
children, don't grow weary;
children, don't grow weary,
for this work's almost done.

OFFERING PRAYER

P: Let us pray,
**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.**
C: Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

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

C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that at all times and in all
places we give thanks and praise.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

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

Hosanna in the highest.

Hosanna in the highest.

Page 144

WORDS of INSTITUTION

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

P: Again after supper, He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

P: And now we are bold to pray as Jesus taught us:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever.
Amen.**

INVITATION to COMMUNION

Jesus welcomes you to this table.

Come, here is your God.

LAMB OF GOD

Page 146

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the son of the world: grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

The assembly stands.

Hymn #715, Christ Be Our Light – Five verses

1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Refrain

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

- 2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice. *Refrain*

Refrain

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

- 3 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed. *Refrain*

Refrain

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

- 4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone. *Refrain*

Refrain

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

- 5 Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
signs of your kingdom come. *Refrain*

Refrain

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Hymn #631, Love Divine, All Loves Excelling – Four verses

- 1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter ev'ry trembling heart.
- 2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit
into ev'ry troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit;
let us find thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.

3 Come, Almighty, to deliver;
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

4 Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee!
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heav'n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Hymn #257, O Come, O Come Emmanuel – Eight verses

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

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way. *Refrain*

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

3 O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe. *Refrain*

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

4 O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain*

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

5 O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery. *Refrain*

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain*

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

7 O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

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

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

The assembly stands.

COMMUNION BLESSING

P: Now may the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ strengthen
you and keep you in his peace.

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER after COMMUNION

P: Let us pray, People of God

C: **as we leave this place, we go into a weary world—so speak
tenderly. Do the good that is yours to do. Choose connection.
Hold onto hope. And remember that Christ took on flesh for you.
You are God’s beloved. So go rejoicing. The world needs it.
Amen.**

BLESSING

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✚ give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be an Altar Guild meeting on **Saturday, December 7th at 10:00 a.m.** For more information, contact Vicki Hamilton.

Christmas Poinsettias

Since last year's poinsettia plan worked out so well, the Altar Guild will repeat it this year. We will purchase a number of poinsettias for the sanctuary and ask that the congregation make donations for the purchase cost of **\$115.00**. Along with the donations, memorial and other dedications will be accepted for the Christmas bulletin. Any funds beyond the purchase of the flowers will be donated to St. Paul's General Fund.

The memorial gift form is available in the narthex. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Thanks! Joan Schultz

WELCA EVENT!

The guest speaker for WELCA's December meeting will be Carson City Sheriff Ken Furlong.

He is always great.

The meeting date is **Monday, December 9th at 6:00 p.m.**

We will have a cookie exchange.

It's optional, but wear an ugly Christmas sweater and be part of the competition for the ugliest!

All our men are invited too!

It will be a great time.

For more information, please contact Joan Schultz.

Thanks!

*We grieve with Traci and Jared Angel
on the passing of Jared's aunt Tammy Irwin.
May Tammy's memory be a blessing!*



The assembly stands.

SENDING SONG: Hymn #248, People Look East – Four verses

- 1 People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east, and sing today—
Love, the Guest, is on the way.

- 2 Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flow'r may flourish.
People, look east, and sing today—
Love, the Rose, is on the way.

3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east, and sing today—
Love, the Star, is on the way.

4 Angels announce with shouts of mirth
him who brings new life to earth.
Set ev'ry peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east, and sing today—
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

DISMISSAL

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

C: **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE: Gavotte and Double by George Frideric Handel

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