

Worship Plan for December 14th, 2025
St. Paul's Lutheran Family
Third Sunday of Advent: Joy Sunday

PRELUDE

G Major by Handel

WELCOME

LIGHTING ADVENT WREATH

*We Are Waiting
St. Paul's Lutheran Family Choir*

The Assembly Stands

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Long-expected God,

we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. - Amen.

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. ✝ You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior. **-Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN *ELW #242 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn*

- 1 Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn,
for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born,
behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor,
to bring all hearts together,
he opens wide the heav'nly door
and lives now inside us forever.

- 2 To us, to all in sorrow and fear,
Emmanuel comes a-singing,
his humble song is quiet and near,
yet fills the earth with its ringing;
music to heal the broken soul
and hymns of lovingkindness,
the thunder of his anthems roll
to shatter all hatred and blindness.
- 3 In darkest night his coming shall be,
when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free,
so warm and gentle and caring.
Then shall the mute break forth in song,
the lame shall leap in wonder,
the weak be raised above the strong,
and weapons be broken asunder.
- 4 Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless.
Love be our song and love our prayer
and love our endless story;
may God fill ev'ry day we share
and bring us at last into glory.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

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GREETING

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

And also with you.

The Assembly is Seated

KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

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.

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

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

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

A reading from Isaiah.

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!"

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God’s people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSLAM: PSLAM 146:5-10

Refrain: The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)

⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob ¹ for their help,
whose hope is in the ¹ LORD their God;

⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that ¹ is in them;**
who keeps promis- ¹ es forever;

⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to ¹ those who hunger.
The LORD sets the ¹ captive free.

⁸ **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who ¹ are bowed**

down;

the LORD ^l loves the righteous. R

Refrain: *The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)*

⁹ The LORD cares ^l for the stranger;

the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way ^l of the wicked.

¹⁰ **The LORD shall ^l reign forever,**

your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. ^l Hallelujah! R

Refrain: *The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)*

SECOND READING: James 5:7-10

A reading from James.

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

BELL CHIOR

O Come, O come Emmanuel

St. Paul's Lutheran Family Bell Choir

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia.

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 11:2-11

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eleventh chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴ Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Assembly is Seated

CHILDREN’S PROGRAM

St. Paul’s Lutheran Family Youth Group

The Assembly Stands

HYMN OF THE DAY

ELW #715 Christ, Be Our Light

- 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*

- 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*

- 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*

- 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*

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

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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. Amen.

The Assembly is seated

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Please Share a Sign of Peace with one another

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING HYMN

ELW# 253 He Came Down

- 1 He came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have love;
hallelujah forevermore.
- 2 He came down that we may have light;
he came down that we may have light;
he came down that we may have light;
hallelujah forevermore.

3 He came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have peace;
hallelujah forevermore.

4 He came down that we may have joy;
he came down that we may have joy;
he came down that we may have joy;
hallelujah forevermore.

Text: Cameroon traditional

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

**Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come.
Amen.**

The Assembly Stands

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY
Holy, holy, holy Lord,

**Lord God of pow'r and might:
Heav'n 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.**

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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.

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

LORD'S PRAYER

**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 Assembly is Seated

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

LAMB OF GOD

**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 sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us
peace.**

COMMUNION HYMNS

ELW #254 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

- 1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of ev'ry nation,
joy of ev'ry longing heart.
- 2 Born thy people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

ELW #263 Savior of Nations Come

- 1 Savior of the nations, come;
show the glory of the Son!
Ev'ry people, stand in awe;
praise the perfect Son of God.
- 2 Not of human seed or worth,
but from God's own mystic breath,
fruit in Mary's womb begun
when God breathed the Word, his Son.
- 3 Wondrous birth! Oh, wondrous child
of the virgin undefiled!
Mighty God and man in one,
eager now his race to run!
- 4 God the Father is his source,
back to God he runs his course;
down to death and hell descends,
God's high throne he reascends.

- 5 He leaves heaven to return;
trav'ling where dull hellfires burn;
riding out, returning home
as the Savior who has come.
- 6 God the Father's precious Son
girds himself in flesh to run
for the trophies of our souls,
longer than this round earth rolls.
- 7 Shining stable in the night,
breathing vict'ry with your light;
darkness cannot hide your flame,
shining bright as Jesus' name.

Text: attr. St. Ambrose, 340-397; tr. composite Text sts. 3-4 © 1969 Concordia Publishing House Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

ELW #737 He Comes to Us as One Unknown

- 1 He comes to us as one unknown,
a breath unseen, unheard;
as though within a heart of stone,
or shriveled seed in darkness sown,
a pulse of being stirred,
a pulse of being stirred.
- 2 He comes when souls in silence lie
and thoughts of day depart;
half-seen upon the inward eye,
a falling star across the sky
of night within the heart,
of night within the heart.
- 3 He comes to us in sound of seas,
the ocean's fume and foam;
yet small and still upon the breeze,
a wind that stirs the tops of trees,
a voice to call us home,
a voice to call us home.

- 4 He comes in love as once he came
by flesh and blood and birth;
to bear within our mortal frame
a life, a death, a saving name,
for ev'ry child of earth,
for ev'ry child of earth.
- 5 He comes in truth when faith is grown;
believed, obeyed, adored;
the Christ in all the scriptures shown,
as yet unseen, but not unknown,
our Savior and our Lord,
our Savior and our Lord.

Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith, b. 1926

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The Assembly Stands

SONG AFTER COMMUNION *ELW #207 Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise*

Thankful hearts and voices raise;
tell ev'ryone what God has done.
Let ev'ryone who seeks the Lord rejoice
and bear the name of Christ.
Send us with your promises
and lead your people forth in joy
with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia, alleluia.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980

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COMMUNION BLESSING

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

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

BLESSING

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.

Amen.

The Assembly Seated

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

The Assembly Stands

SENDING HYMN

ELW #248 People, Look East

- 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.

Text: Eleanor E. Farjeon, 1881-1965

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Geavante in Double by Handel