

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 24, 2023

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
215 N. Warren St.
Orwigsburg, PA
570-366-2316

www.stpauls-orwigsburg.org

GATHERING

PRELUDE "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" A. Page

THE LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure, and whose steadfast love endures forever. **Amen.**

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

"We Are Waiting for Jesus"

[Four candles are lit.]

1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp). The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace." The second staff continues the melody with lyrics: "We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace." The third staff has lyrics: "Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise." The fourth staff concludes with lyrics: "We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace." The score uses various note values including quarter, eighth, and half notes, with some notes beamed together.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Let us now confess our sins.

Silence is kept for reflection.

O God of love and forgiveness,

we confess that we have lost our way and are captive to sin.

We have neither welcomed the stranger, nor loved our neighbor.

We have not shared your good gifts with those in need.

Open our hearts and hands,

that we may be reconciled and renewed by the light of Christ. Amen.

Know that through Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven,

and that you are freed to live as children of God.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

[See back of bulletin]

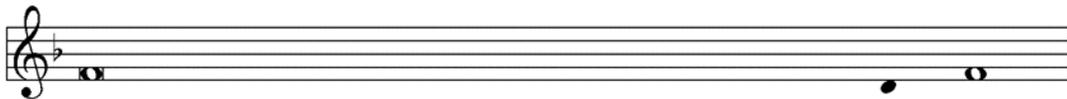
GREETING

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.**

KYRIE



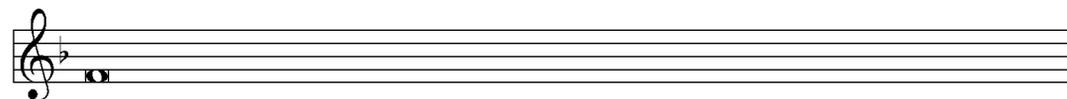
A In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



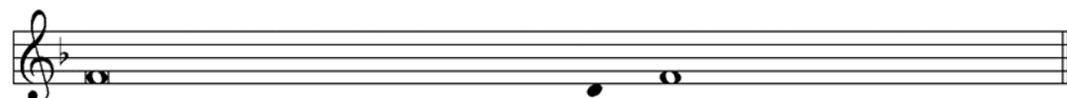
A For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



A 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 mer - cy.

A For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,
 let us pray to the Lord. **B** Lord, have mer - cy.
A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **B** A - men

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

A READING FROM 2 SAMUEL

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, “See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.” ³Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.”

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I 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 and a tabernacle.

⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” ⁸Now 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 to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and 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. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from 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.

¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

(2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

LUKE 1:46b-55 (Read responsively)

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

(Luke 1:46b-55)

A READING FROM ROMANS

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

(Romans 16:25-27)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He 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 ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to 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 holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

(Luke 1:26-38)

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"
[See back of bulletin]

THE NICENE CREED (Read in Unison)

We believe in one God,

the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven;

by the power of the Holy Spirit

he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again

in accordance with the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,

and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified,

He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

Bring your church into thoughtful and caring relationships with those of other faiths. Strengthen our vision and values, that we work may together for the sake of our world. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Bless the field and crops with holy rest. Prepare them to thrive, that they provide abundant food in due season. Protect creatures who hibernate and provide for all who scavenge for food. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Teach humility to all in positions of authority. Break down systems that perpetuate inequity and exclusion. Do not allow wealth, power, or pride to become idols that obscure your call to “do justice.” Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Comfort all who are afraid. Rescue all who live under threat of violence. Provide healing and wholeness to all who suffer. We especially pray for everyone on our prayer list. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Make our homecomings joyful as we gather with friends and families. Help us to give thanks for all that we have been given. Grant safety to all who is far from their home. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We give thanks for Mary and all your servants in every generation who lived according to your promise of new and abundant life. Strengthen us by their example until the revelation of your glory is made known. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

(Pastor concludes): Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

OFFERING

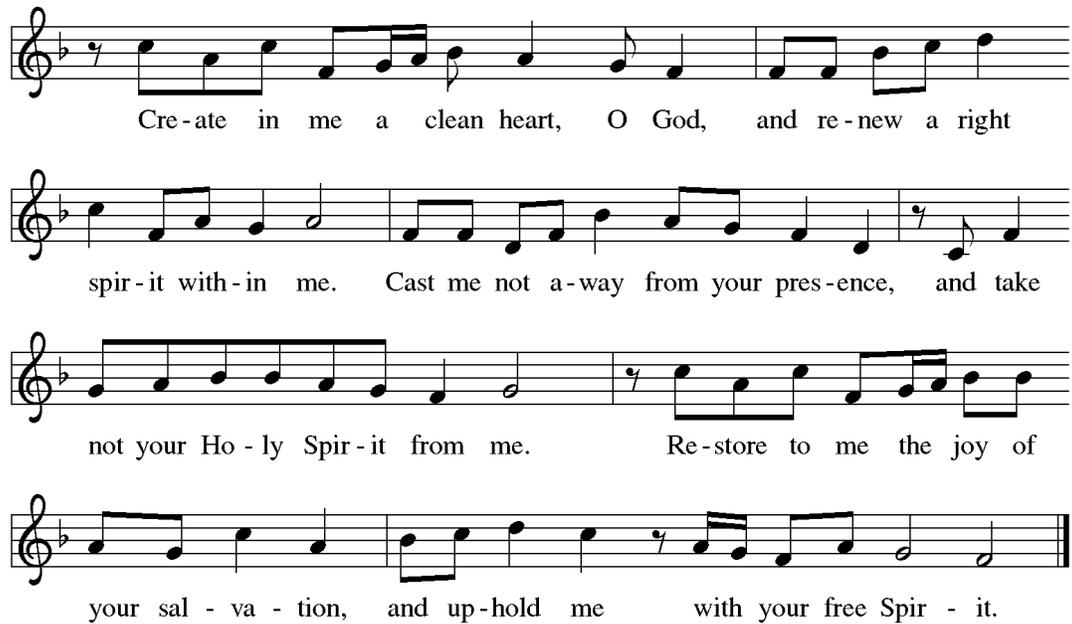
OFFERTORY (8 AM)

ANTHEM (10:30 AM)

"Merciful Savior"
Vivian Rupert & Justin McClure

M. Hamby

OFFERTORY HYMN



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right
spir-it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take
not your Ho-ly Spir-it from me. Re-store to me the joy of
your sal-va-tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir-it.

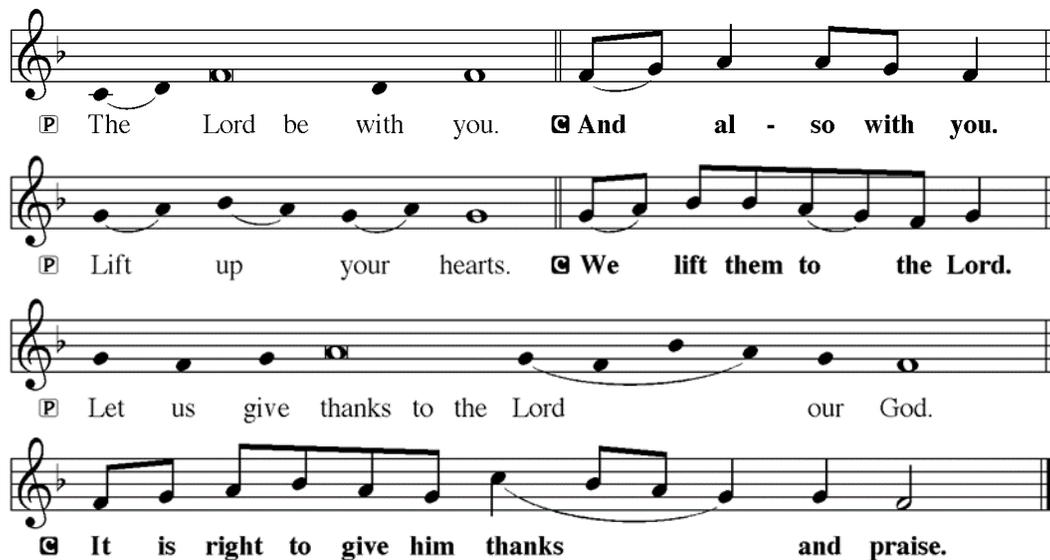
OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of abundance and new life, we bring before you the fruits of your creation, and with them we offer our very lives. Teach us patience, renew our hope, and help us to care for those in need, until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

MEAL

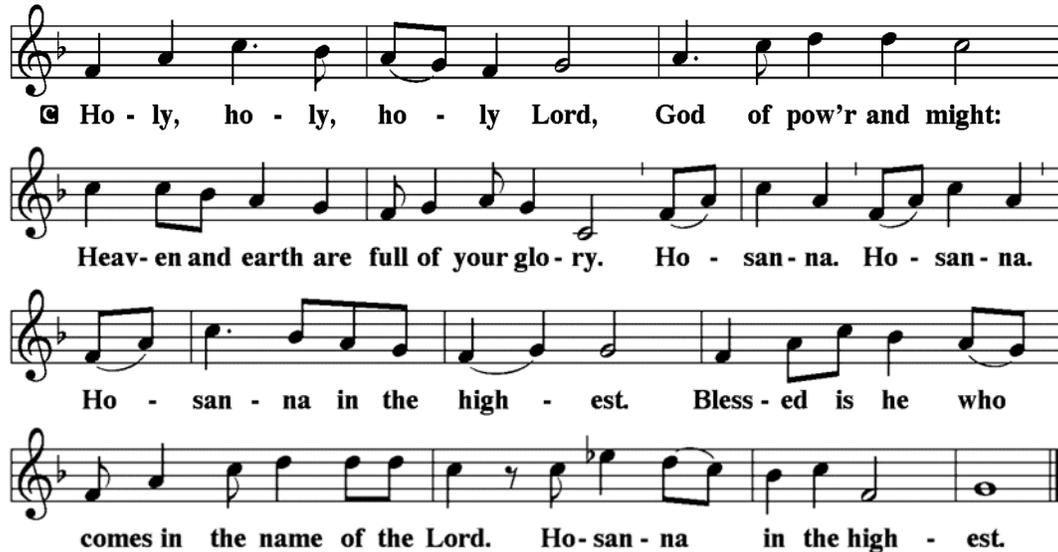
GREAT THANKSGIVING



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 him thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and ever living God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:
Heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.
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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth.

In mercy for our fallen world, you gave your only Son,

that all those who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

We give thanks to you

for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ.

Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts,

that we may receive our Lord with a living faith

as he comes to us in his holy supper.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

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.

THE 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.

INSTRUCTIONS

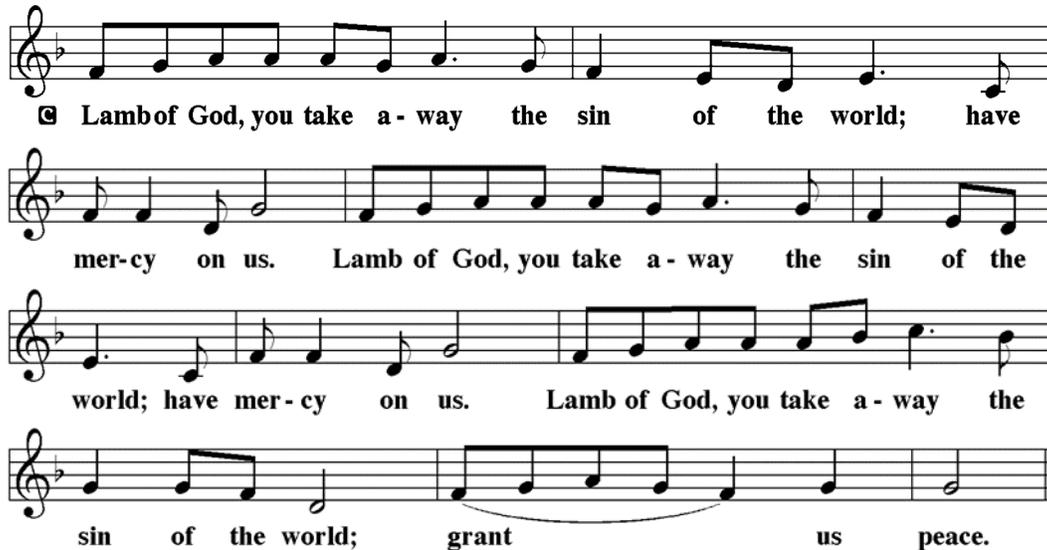
All who are baptized and seek forgiveness of their sins and the promise of eternal life in Jesus Christ are welcome to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion by intinction. Communicants may dip a wafer of bread (the Body of Christ) into a chalice of wine (the Blood of Christ) before consuming it. After you have received the Sacrament, you may choose to briefly stand at the chancel rail before returning to your seat.

If you or your child would like to receive a blessing rather than the Sacrament, please come forward and say, "A blessing," or cross your arms over your chest.

Those who are unable to come forward should indicate that they wish to receive the Sacrament and they will receive it as they sit in their pew.

Communion is shared with those seated on the pulpit side and then the lectern side.

AGNUS DEI



♩ 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.

COMMUNION HYMN “Canticle of the Turning” (10:30 AM ONLY)

[See back of bulletin]

TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Almighty God, you have invited us to feast with you and with one another in this holy meal. Nourished now in body and spirit, send us forth from this table to proclaim your presence, even as we await the glorious coming of Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the blessing of Almighty God,
the Father, the ✝ Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN “Once in Royal David’s City” [See back of bulletin]

THE DISMISSAL

Go now in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

"And the Glory of the Lord"

G. F. Handel

Our Liturgy and Music are used by permission through Augsburg Fortress License #20611.

Altar flowers are presented in memory of loved ones by Diane Brobst.

Chancel flowers are presented in memory of Kermit and Cathlene Krammes, Jody, Kevin, and Kirsten by Robin Zimmerman.

Bulletins are presented in memory of Robert Shaud and Carl and Shirley Brensinger by Darin and Crystal Brensinger.

Introduction to the day: God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David’s throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel’s greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, “Count me in.” We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, “Count us in.”

THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL’S

Sunday, December 24	9:30 AM	Worship with Holy Communion
	5:00 PM	Worship with Holy Communion
	9:00 PM	Worship with Holy Communion
Thursday, December 28	10:00 AM	Rainbow Friends
Saturday, December 30	5:30 PM	Worship
Sunday, December 31	9:30 AM	Worship with Holy Communion

MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

The ELCA and Lutheran Disaster Response has a history of providing support for our partners in the Middle East. Your donations designated for “Middle East Crisis” will be used entirely to provide support to those whose lives have been impacted by disasters in the region. Gifts may be given by check to St. Paul’s Lutheran Church with the memo line “Middle East Crisis.” Cash donations should also indicate that the donation is for the “Middle East Crisis.”

2024 FLOWER AND BULLETIN DEDICATIONS

The green Flower and Bulletin binder has been updated! Sponsors for Altar flowers, Chancel flowers, and bulletins can now be dedicated for the year 2024.

SERVING THIS SUNDAY (12/24/23)

9:30 AM

GREETER: Bill Smoot; USHER: Chris Long; LECTOR: Tina Butler

COMMUNION ASST.: Chris Long

ALTAR GUILD: Tina Butler and Chris Long

COUNTERS: Connie Teter, Joanne Emerich, and Barb Sterner

SERVING TODAY – CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00 PM

GREETER: Deb Bolinsky; USHERS: Hadley, Kate, and Danika Bolinsky, and Glenda Bright; LECTOR: Deb Bolinsky; COMMUNION ASST.: Kay Weidensaul and Ruth Ann Withers; ALTAR GUILD: Joyce O'Rourke and Becky Smoot

9:00 PM

GREETER: Tina Butler and Wayne Lutsey

USHER: Karen and Maddie Travor; LECTOR: Samantha Clarke

COMMUNION ASST.: Greg Sklar

SERVING NEXT SUNDAY (12/31/23)

9:30 AM

GREETER: Cindy Ritschel; USHER: Jerry Gossel; LECTOR: Sandy Freeman

COMMUNION ASST.: Sue Reier

ALTAR GUILD: Joyce O'Rourke and Becky Smoot

COUNTERS: Connie Teter, Barb Sterner, and Glenda Bright

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SET

Our annual congregational meeting will be on Sunday February 18, 2024, immediately following the 10:30 a.m. worship service. In case of inclement weather (or other emergency), our annual meeting may be held on the following Sunday at the same time. Please mark your new calendar for this important meeting!

CHRISTMAS EVE & NEW YEAR'S EVE

Later today, we will gather to celebrate Christmas Eve with candle lighting and carols at 5:00 and 9:00 p.m. (rather than 10:00 p.m.) Holy Communion will also be shared at each service. No worship is scheduled on Monday, December 25, Christmas Day. On Sunday, December 31, New Year's Eve, we will worship together at a single 9:30 a.m. worship service (rather than at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.). Please mark your calendars!

GATHERING HYMN

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Unison

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
 2 O come, thou Day - spring, come and cheer our spir - its by thine
 3 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, and or - der all things,
 4 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind all peo - ples in one

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here, un -
 ad - vent here; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night, and
 far and nigh; to us the path of knowl - edge show, and
 heart and mind; bid en - vy, strife and quar - rels cease; fill

Refrain (Harmony)

til the Son of God ap - pear.
 death's dark shad - ows put to flight. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -
 cause us in her ways to go.
 the whole world with heav - en's peace.

man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

HYMN OF THE DAY “The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
 2 “For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
 3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
 4 Of her, Em-man - u - el, the Christ, was born



with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
 all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
 “To me be as it pleas - eth God,” she said.
 in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



“All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
 thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
 “My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God’s ho - ly name.”
 and Chris-tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say:



most high - ly fa - vored la - dy.”
 most high - ly fa - vored la - dy.” Glo - ri - a!
 Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,
 “Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy.”

ATTENTION: ALL COMMITTEE LEADERS

Your year-end reports for 2023 will be needed by Sunday, January 7, 2024. Please have them completed, proofread, and ready for print by the deadline date. Email your file(s) to: office@stpauls-orwigsburg.org.

Reverend Michael T. Petresky	570-366-2316 - Ext 11	pastormike@stpauls-orwigsburg.org
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Amy Dewald, Office Support Staff	570-366-2316	office@stpauls-orwigsburg.org
Carl Heintzelman, Sexton	484-408-5152	
Karen Travor, Treasurer	610-507-2797	karen@stpauls-orwigsburg.org
Wayne Lutsey, Financial Secretary	570-617-9617	cwlutsey@gmail.com
Jessica Swick, Social Media Manager	936-648-6809	jessica@stpauls-orwigsburg.org

COMMUNION HYMN

“Canticle of the Turning”



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .
 3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
 4 Though the na - tions rage from . . age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
 work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
 jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . . from his throne.
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.



Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

SENDING HYMN

“Once in Royal David’s City”

1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and Lord of all,
3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;
4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,

where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:
and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;
for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;
we shall see him; but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;

Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
with the poor and meek and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.
there his chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo - ry crowned.

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are placed between the staves.

“SECOND SUNDAY” SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our next Second Sunday School class will take place on January 14, 2024! Children ages 1-10 are welcome to come upstairs during the 10:30 AM service for Bible stories, fun, fellowship, and a snack. Students ages 11 to 18 are invited to join me between the services (9:15 - 10:15 a.m.) for a teen Sunday School group.

Please contact Sarah Eger with questions or to volunteer. (570) 394-3522 (cell)
swoodring86@hotmail.com