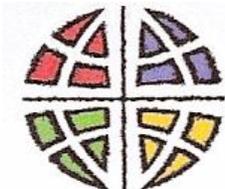




First Sunday of Advent
November 28, 2021



SAINT PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
3383 EAST LAKE LANSING ROAD
EAST LANSING, MI 48823

PHONE (517) 351-8541

Pastor Carl E. Ballard
E-MAIL: pastor@stpaul-el.org
officemanager@stpaul-el.org

Visitors WELCOME! If this is your first time worshipping with us, please sign our guest registry just outside the sanctuary doors. We hope you are blessed through worship today. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the church at 351-8541.

Children are always welcome in worship! The choir room (off the sanctuary) can also be used as a ***cry room*** for younger children and includes a sound system so parents may continue to participate in the service. Clipboards are available for use during the service with children's bulletins, activities and crayons. Please see an usher if you are unable to locate them.

Sunday School/Education is available September-May.

This Bulletin is for your use during the service and to take home for the upcoming week. If you choose not to take it home, please leave it in the back of the church and we will make sure it is recycled.

Newsletters and Calendars of Upcoming Events are available in the lobby/narthex. We welcome anyone who has an interest in our small groups or activities! You can also look us up on the web at www.stpaul-el.org.

Contacting Us: Our office manager is Norma VanKuiken. The office email address is officemanager@stpaul-el.org. Our director of music is Elene Kobulashvili. You may leave a message for her at 351-8541.

Holy Communion is available at each service. All baptized, communing Christians are invited to celebrate Communion with us. **We believe** that Holy Communion requires sincere repentance, faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and an earnest desire to amend one's sinful life, as well as acceptance of the scriptural teaching of the Real Presence of Christ with his body and blood in the Sacrament (Luther's Small Catechism).

You're invited to share in fellowship after worship. Kay always makes the most delicious snacks to our delight. We would love this opportunity to introduce you to the St. Paul community.

P-Presiding Minister

A-Assisting Minister

C-Congregation

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.

(Please stand as you are able.)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross in remembrance of baptism as the presiding minister begins:

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

P: God for whom we wait,

C: in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.

P: Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the

Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

GATHERING SONG

**Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn
ELW 242**

*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.*

*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.*

*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.

*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.*

BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Candle Lighter: At every beginning there is a yearning for the one who is coming. O Emmanuel,

C: Wake us up to your coming.

CL: We gather together to expect the unexpected and imagine the unimaginable. O Emmanuel,

C: Wake us up to your coming.

CL: We wait for the day when God will recycle tanks into tractors and transform minefields into soccer fields. O Emmanuel,

C: Wake us up to your coming.

CL: We stay awake by telling stories that offer a glimmer of a future and agitate dormant hope within us. O Emmanuel,

C: Wake us up to your coming.

CL: Jesus, we welcome your presence now with the lighting of this candle, whose flame brings warmth to winter and fills this place with the glow of hope.

C: Amen.

Come Now, Oh Prince of Peace

ELW 247

*Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.*

*Come now, O God of love, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.*

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

ELW Setting 10, Page 203

*Have mercy on us, Lord,
and hear our solemn prayer.
We come to hear your living word;
it saves us from despair.*

*Have mercy on us, Christ,
and wash away our sin.
Pour out your grace and make us whole
that new life may begin.*

*Have mercy on us, Lord;
make sin and shame depart.
Renew us with your saving pow'r;
create in us new hearts!*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: **Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem**

us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

(Please be seated.)

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Change My Heart, O God

ELW 801

Refrain

Change my heart, O God; make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.

You are the potter; I am the clay.

Mold me and make me; this is what I pray. Refrain

THE WORD

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

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.

¹⁴The 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. ¹⁵In 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. ¹⁶In 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."

Word of God, word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 25:1-10

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

¹To 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.**

³Let 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.**

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

⁶**Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.**

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

⁸**You are gracious and upright, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners in your way.**

⁹You lead the lowly in justice
and teach the lowly your way.

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

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.

Word of God, word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand as you are able.)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW Setting 10, Page 205

Alleluia! Lord and Savior: open now your saving word.

Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred.

Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

GOSPEL ANNOUNCEMENT

Luke 21:25-36

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

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.

[Jesus said:] ²⁵"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. ²⁸Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

²⁹Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰as

soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³²Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. ³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated.)

SERMON

Pastor Carl E. Ballard

(Please stand as you are able.)

HYMN OF THE DAY O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

ELW 257

*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.*

*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**

*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**

*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**

NICENE CREED

**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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**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,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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.**

THE PRAYERS

A: In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

(A brief silence)

A: God of presence and peace, strengthen your church around the globe to proclaim the message of your love coming to the world. Open our hearts to recognize your face in all people and in all of creation. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of mighty redwoods and microscopic plants, fields and city parks, the wind and the waves, be a healing balm to our wounded planet. May we nurture what you have lovingly created. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of equity and compassion, bring righteousness and goodness to all peoples of the earth. Give a heart of discernment and integrity to leaders in our communities. Hear us, O God

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of protection, provide care and compassion to those who serve in our armed forces as they face the trauma of war. We pray especially for *Beth & Ryan, Jonathan, Noah, Irene, and Alex*. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of promises kept and new dreams awakened, shelter your people from destructive storms. We pray for those whose lives have been upended by natural disasters, for the work of Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran World Relief, and other relief organizations. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of comfort and care, be present with those who watch and wait. Come to all who await births, deaths, divorces, new unions, new jobs, retirements, healing, and life transitions of every kind. We pray especially for those we lift before you now. (*a brief moment for those names to be shared in prayer*) Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

(*Ahren, Barb & family, Bev, Charles, Cindy, Deb, Felicia, Gary, Harrison & Sara, Helen & family, Jon, JoAnne, Judy's family, Kris, Lawton, Lizzy, Lori & family, Lynne & Jim, Marge, Mary, Bev & family, Adam & Shani & Ezra, Steve & family, Stacy & Char*)

A: God our guide, you are greater than we can imagine. Surround congregations with your expansive inclusion. Be present in the midst of disagreements, differences, and questions. Unite people of diverse viewpoints in the love of Christ.

We especially lift up to you Presiding Bishop Elizabeth, our Synod Bishop Craig, and Pastor Carl. We ask that you be with their respective staffs as they live out their callings to serve.

As we are called to be one, even as Jesus and the Father are one, be with the leaders and the congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church in Kalamazoo. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of companionship and community, we give you thanks for the saints who journeyed with us and now abide in you. Even in distress and uncertainty, make us confident that your promises endure forever. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

C: Amen.

GREETING OF PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

THE MEAL

*The gifts of the bread, wine and contributions
are brought forward to the altar.*

OFFERTORY

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

ELW 184

*Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,
and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gather the hopes and dreams of all;
unite them with the prayers we offer.
Grace our table with your presence,*

and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

A: God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace.

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.

PROPER PREFACE

P: 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. 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 to judge the world in righteousness. 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 Lord,

*God of power 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, hosanna in the highest.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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 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.

P: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P: With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

C: Come, Lord Jesus.

P: Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

C: Come, Holy Spirit.

P: All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

C: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

All baptized, communing Christians are invited to celebrate Communion with us. All others are invited to come forward for a blessing.

Communion will be offered a couple of ways. You may either take a communion cup with host as you enter worship and come forward to the rail or take part where you are seated. Or you may come forward and receive Communion directly from the Pastor at the rail.

When approaching the communion rail, come forward down the side aisle, kneel, if you are able, starting at the front of the communion rail (spot closest to the font) on your side and filling in toward the back. After receiving both the bread and the wine, you may return to your seat by the center aisle. If you prefer grape juice, please ask the assisting minister.

COMMUNION HYMN

Come and Fill Our Hearts

ELW 528

Come and fill our hearts with your peace.

You alone, O Lord, are holy.

Come and fill our hearts with your peace.

Alleluia!

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.

P: The body of Christ, given for you.

C: Amen.

A: The blood of Christ, shed for you.

C: Amen.

*(When all have returned to their seats,
please stand as you are able.)*

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

C: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: Let us pray.

C: Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. Amen.

BLESSING

P: The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus for whom we wait.

C: Amen.

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

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

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

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

from age to age the same!

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Christ is near.

C: Thanks be to God.

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St. Paul Lutheran Church uses Vanco eGiving tools, to provide the opportunity for on-line giving. You may use the free GivePlus App (Google Play or Apple Store). On-line giving may also be accomplished on our website at <https://stpaul-el.org/donations/>

Check out our Facebook page, *St. Paul Lutheran Church*.

Pastor Carl's office hours are by appointment.

Sign up sheets!!

Advent Candle Lighters for Sunday and Wednesday.

Heavenly Hot Dish meals for Advent Wednesdays.

Please let us know if you plan to attend dinner too!

Poinsettia Orders.

PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH HAPPENINGS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28th

10:00 AM - Worship Service

First Sunday in Advent

6:30 PM - Evening Bar Theology Hour

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29th

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30th

7:00 PM – Matthew/Mark Bible Study

In Person and Virtual

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1st

2:00 PM – Service Recording

5:15 to 7:30 PM – Pantry Distribution

6:00 PM – Heavenly Hot Dish Meal
with Advent Service to follow at 6:45 PM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2nd

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3rd

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4th

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5th

10:00 AM - Worship Service

Second Sunday in Advent