

# St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church

Second Sunday of Advent + Saturday, December 4, 2021

## INTRODUCTION

*Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the LORD of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."*

## BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that, attentive to your Word, we may confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

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

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

**Amen**

## 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**

Lord, have mercy:

**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy:

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy:

**Lord, have mercy.**

## **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

John the Baptist calls all people to prepare the Lord's way  
for the kingdom of heaven is near.

Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.

Baptize us with the fire of your Spirit,  
that we may be a light shining in the darkness  
welcoming others as Christ has welcomed us,  
for he is our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God forever.

**Amen.**

## **HYMN OF PRAISE**

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.**

Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father:

We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.**

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy, have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.**

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give  
to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our  
Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and  
forever. **Amen.**

### FIRST READING: MALACHI 3:1-4

*God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means “my messenger”) will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God’s people, as silver and gold are refined.*

A reading from Malachi.

<sup>1</sup>See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>2</sup>But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; <sup>3</sup>he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. <sup>4</sup>Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM: LUKE 1:68-79

<sup>68</sup>Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel,  
you have come to your people and set them free.

<sup>69</sup>**You have raised up for us a mighty Savior,  
born of the house of your servant David.**

<sup>70</sup>Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies,  
<sup>71</sup>from the hands of all who hate us,

<sup>72</sup>**to show mercy to our forebears,  
and to remember your holy covenant.**

<sup>73</sup>This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham:

<sup>74</sup>to set us free from the hands of our enemies,  
**free to worship you without fear,  
<sup>75</sup>holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life.**

<sup>76</sup>And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,

<sup>77</sup>**to give God’s people knowledge of salvation  
by the forgiveness of their sins.**

<sup>78</sup>In the tender compassion of our God  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

<sup>79</sup>**to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?  
You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.**

## GOSPEL: LUKE 3:1-6

*John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.*

<sup>1</sup>In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup>as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

<sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;

<sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' "

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

### 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;  
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

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

You send messengers into the world to proclaim the day of your coming. Make our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay preachers confident in their preaching, that their words and our lives witness to your grace. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Send your Spirit to all living creatures that are endangered. Provide them with shelter and care, and bring us into right relationship with the earth that you create and call good. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Send leaders to our nations, cities, schools, and businesses to work on behalf of those who have lost parents, spouses, and loved ones; immigrants; the imprisoned; those living in poverty; and all who are oppressed. Make them bold in their commitments to justice and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Send your servants to care for those who suffer. Use our ministries and our lives to bring your love and compassion to those who are hungry, oppressed, lonely, or ill.

Especially we remember and pray for those who are on our prayer list and on our hearts ... Grant them healing and wholeness. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Send prophets to speak difficult truths, even when they are poorly received. Embolden those who ask hard questions and challenge accepted ways. Instill in youth and elders alike a passion for pointing to Jesus in all things. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We remember your saints, both those publicly celebrated and those more humbly remembered. Confident that your work will be completed, we live in faith until the day of your coming. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

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.

**Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## **OFFERING**

*We give our offerings in praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ and for the sake of Jesus' ongoing mission and ministry in this world. We have been entrusted to carry out this mission Jesus' name, bringing the good news of Jesus to the people of this community and around the world. Please, take a minute of your time to make an electronic gift through the St. Paul's Website [www.stpauls-edison.org/online-giving.html](http://www.stpauls-edison.org/online-giving.html). Please consider making this gift a recurring gift, and look for ways to grow in your giving for the sake of Christ's mission through this congregation. You may also mail your offering to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 445 Old Post Rd., Edison NJ 08817.*

## **PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS**

Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord, fill to the brim our cup of blessing.

Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,

that we may be fed, we may be fed with the bread of life.

Gather the hopes and the dreams of all; unite them with the prayers we offer now.

Grace our table with your presence, and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray.

Blessed are you,

**O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

## 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 and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everliving 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

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might:**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

You are indeed holy, O God, the fountain of all holiness;

you bring light from darkness, life from death, speech from silence.

We worship you for our lives and for the world you give us.

We thank you for the new world to come

and for the love that will rule all in all.

We praise you for the grace shown to Israel, your chosen,

the people of your promise:

the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land,  
the memory of the ancestors, the homecoming from exile,  
and the prophets' words that will not be in vain.

In all this we bless you for your only-begotten Son,  
who fulfilled and will fulfill all your promises.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's  
death until he comes.

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup  
we remember the incarnation of your Son:  
his human birth and the covenant he made with us.

We remember the sacrifice of his life:  
his eating with outcasts and sinners,  
and his acceptance of death.

But chiefly we remember his rising from the tomb,  
his ascension to the seat of power,  
and his sending of the holy and life-giving Spirit.

We cry out for the resurrection of our lives,  
when Christ will come again in beauty and power  
to share with us the great and promised feast.

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit,  
that we and all who share in this bread and cup  
may be united in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
may enter the fullness of the kingdom of heaven,  
and may receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

**Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.**

Join our prayers with those of your servants  
of every time and every place, and unite them

with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest  
until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

**Amen, amen, amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

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

**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.**

### **COMMUNION**

The body of Christ, given for you.

**Amen**

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**Amen**

### **POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray.

Pour out upon us the spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of those whom you  
have fed with one heavenly food; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

### **POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE**

**Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace: your word has been fulfilled.**

**My own eyes have seen the salvation**

**which you have prepared in the sight of all people:**

**a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.**

**Glory to the Father and to the Son, glory to the Holy Spirit,**

**as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.**

**Amen.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SUNDAY SCHOOL.** Sunday school meets on **Sunday, Dec. 5 at 11:00 a.m.** There is a special gift for our Sunday school families to grow together in faith.

**ADVENT OFFERING.** We are partnering with sisters and brothers in Christ in India to build a library and ministry center for their community. Our special Advent offering this year is dedicated to help fund this exciting building project, and we have received a generous matching grant to help inspire our giving. Any gift given toward the Library project will be matched 2-for-1. You can give online through our Website or by using any Advent or special offering envelopes.

**SENIOR LUNCH.** Our next senior lunch is scheduled for Tuesday, December 14, at 11:30 a.m. Our topic will be Christmas memories and traditions. Let us know you're coming by calling the church office and leaving a message.

**BIBLE STUDY.** Dive deeper into God's Word by asking the questions you always wanted to ask; explore the background and story behind Sunday's Gospel reading and make connections to the larger story of God and God's people. There are two chances to join a Bible studies each week.

Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. in the lounge.

Thursday evening Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

**DAILY PRAYER.** Cultivating the habit of daily prayer is essential to Christian faith and life. That's why we now offer two ways to make daily prayer part of your life: a daily service of morning prayer and a daily service of night prayer.

**Morning Prayer:** Start each day (Monday through Saturday) with a brief service of Morning Prayer. This service is available as an audio file on the [St. Paul's Website](#) and the St. Paul's Facebook each morning. You can listen and pray along from your home or take it with you as you exercise or commute.

**Night Prayer:** End your day in prayer and fellowship. This ongoing prayer group meets **on Zoom each night at 9:00 p.m.** to share what has been happening in their day, to let go of each day's trouble and to participate in a brief service of night prayer. Zoom log info: Meeting ID = 401 244 599 + Password: 042662.

## BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen**

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**