

“Landmark of the Gospel Since 1834”

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church

Our Purpose: Led by the Word of God, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church is a family who lives and shares the gospel of Jesus Christ through love and service to all.

January 4, 2026

10:30 AM

Festival of the Epiphany

After the ringing of the bell ...

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Ellery Elick, Organist

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
whose steadfast love is everlasting. **Amen.**
Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection

God-with-us,
we confess that we have turned away
those seeking shelter,
claiming there is no room when we have plenty.
We have made power and wealth our idols,
while you show us true glory: a baby in a manger.
We have overlooked the shepherds,
expecting good news in prettier packaging.
Too often, we have valued violence
instead of your peace.
Turn us from our ways to your ways.
Grant us the grace to begin again.
Free us from all that keeps us bound,
and forgive our sin,
through Jesus Christ, who gives himself for us.

Amen.

Hear the good news and rejoice!
You are God's chosen ones,
holy and beloved,
☩ forgiven in Christ,
and freed to respond in joy.
Amen.

HYMN

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

LBW #90. vs. 1&4

1 Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to you we raise;
manifested by the star
to the sages from afar,
branch of royal David's stem
in thy birth at Bethlehem:

**Anthems be to thee addressed,
God in flesh made manifest.**

**4 Grant us grace to see you, Lord,
present in thy holy Word;
Grace to imitate thee now
And be pure, as pure art thou;
that we might become like thee
at thy great epiphany,
and may praise thee, ever blest,
God in flesh made manifest.**

GREETING

God who sent the Light into our world,
God who shone in the Bethlehem manger,
God who spreads the Spirit's rays, be with you all.
And also with you.

EPIPHANY DIALOGUE

We give thanks on this holy day, adorned with epiphanies:
for the star that led the magi to the manger,
that the nations may see the light of Christ;
for the water turned to wine at Cana's wedding,
that the people taste the goodness of the Lord;
for the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Jordan,
that the Christ would save us all.
This is the day that the Lord has made,
we will rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Illumine this day of worship by your Holy Spirit, O God. Let your good news radiate from this time together;
Let your Epiphany grace break into our hearts and minds. Captivate all who hear the gospel words, that we
might believe and obey, in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

What Child is This

LBW 40, vs. 3

**3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
The babe, the son of Mary!**

FIRST READING

Isaiah 60:1-6

¹ Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

² For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

³ Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

PSALM

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

¹ Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;

² **that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;**

³ that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.

⁴ **Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**

Men: All kings shall bow down before him.

⁵ May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.

⁶ **Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.**

⁷ In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

¹⁰ **May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles pay tribute,
and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.**

Women: All kings shall bow down before him.

¹¹ May all kings bow down before him,
and all the nations do him service.

¹² **For the king delivers the poor who cry out in distress,**

the oppressed, and those who have no helper.

¹³ He has compassion on the lowly and poor,
and preserves the lives of the needy.

¹⁴ **From oppression and violence he redeems their lives,
and precious is their blood in his sight.**

Everyone: All kings shall bow down before him.

SECOND READING Ephesians 3:1-12

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—² for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, ³ and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴ a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵ In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶ that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷ Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; ¹⁰ so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

LBW 75, vs. 6

**As a star, God's holy word
leads us to our King and Lord;
brightly from its sacred pages
shall this light throughout the ages
shine upon our path of life,
shine upon our path of life.**

GOSPEL

Matthew 2:1-12

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.' "

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the

house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

HYMN

Christ be Our Light

R#127, vs. 1, 2&5

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}

[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]

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

NICENE CREED

LBW p. 84

**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**

INSTALLATION OF CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS

The following people have been elected by the congregation to positions of leadership. We give thanks for their willingness to serve. In baptism we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God; we rejoice now that Lori Madden will serve us as the Congregational and Council Secretary, Becca Benroth will lead us as an Elder and John Hoffhines will lead us as a Trustee in our common life and our mutual mission as a congregation.

They serve with the following individuals who continue their terms: Mike Miller – Congregational President, Suzanne Trego – Congregational Treasurer, P J Tosca – Elder, Gary McCain - Deacon, Ray Noecker– Trustee, Tim Welch – Deacon.

1 Corinthians 12 reminds us: There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (*1 Corinthians 12:4-7*)

You have been elected to positions of leadership and trust in this congregation.

- You are to see that the words and deeds of this household of faith bear witness to God, who gathers us into one together with the whole church.
- You are to seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support, so that the mission of Christ is carried out in this congregation, in the wider church, in this community, and in the whole world.
- You are to be faithful in your specific area of serving, that the Spirit who empowers you may be glorified.
- You are to be examples of faith active in love, fostering peace, harmony, and mutual understanding in this congregation.

On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I ask you:
Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the offices
to which you have been elected?

Leaders: I will, and I ask God to help me.

The assembly stands. Those being installed face the assembly.

People of God, I ask you:

Will you support these, your elected leaders,
and will you share in the mutual ministry
that Christ has given to all who are baptized?

We will, and we ask God to help us.

Those being installed face the presiding minister, who addresses them.

I now declare you installed as officers and council members of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Ashville, Ohio. Almighty God bless you, and direct your days and your deeds in peace, that you may be faithful servants of Christ. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Each Petition will end "Lead us, O God: **lead us by your light.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERING SONG

LBW 82, vs.3

**As they offered gifts most rare
at thy cradle, rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heav'nly king.**

OFFERING PRAYER

God of heaven and earth,
**from the beginning, you have called forth life,
in which you take delight.**
The trees, the fields, and the seas sing for joy.
**Bless now these gifts, received from your bounty,
that we may join the chorus of creation
to tell of your salvation from day to day.**
Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.

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.

By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations;
 in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son;
 and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory.
 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:

HYMN

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

LBW #60, vs.3

**3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
 Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
 Light and life to all he brings,
 ris'n with healing in his wings.
 Mild he lays his glory by,
 born that we no more may die,
 born to raise each child of earth,
 born to give us second birth. [Refrain]**

Refrain:

**Hark! the herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the newborn King!"**

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.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

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.

Come, Lord Jesus.

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.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours,

Holy One of Israel,

Word of God incarnate,

Power of the Most High,

one God, now and forever.

Amen.

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.

DISTRIBUTION

The light of Christ came into our world and shines in the darkness.

Come now to feast at Christ's table.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O Lord, you look upon us in love and refresh our souls through the gifts of bread and wine. Send us out, reflecting the light of your grace, to tell the story of Jesus Christ, our bright morning star. Amen.

BLESSING

Beloved children of God, what came into being in Christ was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.
The light of Christ shine on you with grace and mercy and fill you with joy and peace. (*John 1:1, 3-5*)
Amen.

HYMN

Bright and Glorious is the Sky

LBW #75, vs. 1,3-5

**1 Bright and glorious is the sky,
Radiant are the heavens high
Where the golden stars are shining.
And their rays to earth inclining
Beckon us to heav'n above,
Beckon us to heav'n above.**

**3 Sages from the East afar,
When they saw this wondrous star,
Went to the find the king of nations
And to offer their oblations
Unto him as Lord and King,
Unto him as Lord and King.**

**4 Him they found in Bethlehem,
Yet He wore no diadem;
They but saw a maiden lowly
With an infant pure and holy
Resting in her loving arms,
Resting in her loving arms.**

**5 Guided by the star, they found
Him whose praise the ages sound.
We too have a star to guide us
Which forever will provide us
With the light to find our Lord,
With the light to find our Lord.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, guided by the light of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

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