

*“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.*

December 14, 2025

10:30 AM

**Advent 3**

*After the ringing of the bell...*

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE**

**BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father,

and of the ✙ Son,

and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Baptized into Christ, let us confess our sin.

Merciful God,

**you free us to love others,**

**but we neglect our neighbors and follow our own way.**

**You lead us by the Spirit of joy and peace,**

**but we turn away from the abundant life you offer.**

**You surround us with patience, kindness,**

**and generosity,**

**but we grow weary in doing what is right.**

**In your mercy, forgive us.**

**Do not give up on us.**

**Heal us, break our bonds,**

**and show us the path of life.**

**Amen.**

You belong to Christ Jesus

and you are God's children through faith.

In the cross of ✙ Christ,

and through the power of the Holy Spirit,

your sins are forgiven.

Clothed with Christ, you are a new creation.

**Amen.**

**HYMN**

*Light Dawns on a Weary World*

**R 250**

**Light dawn on a weary world**

**When eyes begin to see all people's dignity.**

**Light dawn on a weary world:**

**The promised day to justice comes.**

**Refrain:**

**The trees shall clap their hands;**

**The dry lands, gush with spring;**

The hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!  
 We shall go out with joy,  
 And be led forth in peace,  
 As all the world in wonder echoes shalom.  
 Love grows in a weary world  
 When hungry hearts find bread  
 And children's dreams are fed.  
 Love grows in a weary world;  
 The promised feast of plenty comes.

*Refrain*

Hope blooms in a weary world  
 When creatures, once forlorn, find wilderness reborn.  
 Hope blooms in a weary world:  
 The promised green of Eden comes.

*Refrain*

**GREETING**

Gathered in name of our Triune God, we watch for the coming of Christ, Let us prepare our hearts and minds to celebrate this season of waiting.

**LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH**

**SONG**

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

**LBW 45, vs. 2**

2 The highest, most holy,  
 Light of light eternal,  
 born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;  
 Son of the Father now in flesh appearing

Oh, come, let us adore him,  
 Oh, come, let us adore him,  
 Oh, come, let us adore him,  
 Christ the Lord!

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

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.**

**FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 35:1-10**

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
 the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
 like the crocus <sup>2</sup> 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.]]

<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup> 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.”

<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

<sup>6</sup> 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;

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

#### **PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10**

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

<sup>6</sup> **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;  
who keeps promises forever;**

<sup>7</sup> who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.  
The LORD sets the captive free.

<sup>8</sup> **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;  
the LORD loves the righteous.**

<sup>9</sup> The LORD cares for the stranger;  
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

<sup>10</sup> **The LORD shall reign forever,  
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

#### **SECOND LESSON: James 5:7-10**

<sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup> Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

## VERSE

*Alleluia.* See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
**who will prepare your way before you. *Alleluia.*** (*Matt. 11:10*)

## GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 11th chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>2</sup> When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

<sup>7</sup> 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? <sup>8</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> 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.’

<sup>11</sup> “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.**

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

## PROCLAMATION

### HYMN

*Prepare the Royal Highway*

**LBW 26, vs. 1,2&4**

**1 Prepare the royal highway;  
 the King of kings is near!  
 Let ev'ry hill and valley  
 a level road appear!  
 Then greet the King of glory,  
 foretold in sacred story:**

### Refrain:

**Hosanna to the Lord,  
 for he fulfills God's Word!**

**2 God's people, see him coming:  
 your own eternal king!**

**Palm branches strew before him!  
 Spread garments! Shout and sing!  
 God's promise will not fail you!  
 No more shall doubt assail you! [Refrain]**

**4 His is no earthly kingdom;  
 it comes from heav'n above.  
 His rule is peace and freedom  
 and justice, truth, and love.  
 So let your praise be sounding  
 for kindness so abounding: [Refrain]**

#### **ADVENT CREED**

**We believe in one God, who is Creator,  
 maker of all we see and all we don't see.  
 Who is Ruler of the universe: Source of all creation!**

**We believe in one God, who is Jesus Christ,  
 God from God, Light from Light, true God and true human.  
 He is one with the Creator;  
 the Word made flesh, our Messiah: Savior of all creation!**

**We believe in one God, who is Holy Spirit,  
 Breath of God moving among us;  
 Who is one with the Creator; one with the Christ;  
 our Comforter and our Guide: Mentor of all creation!**

#### **THE PEACE**

#### **INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

**LBW p. 96**

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
 and renew a right spirit within me.  
 Cast me not away from your presence,  
 and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
 and uphold me with your free Spirit.**

#### **OFFERING PRAYER**

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

#### **THE PRAYERS**

**Each petition ends: "God of grace, hear our prayer."**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER**

**LBW p. 91**

**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.

### BLESSING

May God who comes among us,  
 Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
 grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,  
 and good news to share today and always.  
 Amen.

### HYMN

*Joy to the World*

LBW 39, vs.1-2

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
 Let earth receive its King;  
 let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
 and heav'n and nature sing,  
 and heav'n and nature sing,  
 and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
 Let all their songs employ,  
 while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
 repeat the sounding joy,  
 repeat the sounding joy,  
 repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

### DISMISSAL

*Go in peace, to live and share the gospel of Jesus Christ through love and service to all.*  
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