

Welcome in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ!
St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Irvine (LCMS)
"The Baptism of Our LORD"
Sunday, January 12, 2025
Divine Service
9:30 AM

Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Alfonso O. Espinosa, Ph.D.

Assistant Pastor: Rev. Dr. Steven P. Mueller, Ph.D.

Organist: Gerald Dahlin

Choir Director: Mark Howard

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Mission

To foster the freedom and love we share in Christ to the community by nurturing faith in Him through tangible expressions of God's grace.

Vision

To share the Truth and Love of Christ to all ages, cultures, and backgrounds.

Service Offerings

- Sunday Divine Service at 9:30 am
 - Fellowship in Café at 10:30 am and Adult Bible Study at 11:00 am
 - Wednesday Bible Studies at 10 am and 7:15 pm in our church offices.
- You may come in person or join us via TEAMS fully interactive.

Welcome to Saint Paul's

We praise and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ as He comes to serve and bless us through His Word and Sacraments. We follow the ancient liturgy which draws from the Word of God to order and guide our worship. Its biblical structure has been used in the Christian Church before any denominations within Christianity existed. Our worship emphasizes order, beauty, and reverence. We also celebrate the Holy Eucharist and receive the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the

forgiveness of sins. We are excited about what the Lord is doing at St. Paul's, and it is our great joy to serve you!

This is the Saving Gospel/The Good News:

God sent His Son Jesus Christ to take your sin upon Himself and Jesus gave to you His perfect righteousness and holiness. In Christ, it is a fact, and it is reality that your sins are forgiven, covered by His blood. And because Christ defeated death, you too – as you trust in Him alone – have eternal life. This is the Good News. It is so powerful because the Holy Spirit works through it to create and sustain faith in our hearts to hold to our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel costs Jesus everything but costs us nothing. It is yours. It is God's GIFT to you. Hold to it and know that you ARE (present tense) saved from sin, death, and the power of the devil; that you are saved TO (present tense) the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation! That's the Christian, a forgiven sinner who lives for God and loves their neighbor. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

The Lord's Supper

The Holy Sacrament is celebrated at this congregation in the confession and glad confidence that, as He says, our Lord gives into our mouths not only bread and wine but His very body and blood to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our union with Him and with one another. Our Lord invites to His table those who trust His words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as He forgives and loves us, that they may show forth His death until He comes. Because those who eat and drink our Lord's body and blood unworthily do so to their great harm and because Holy Communion is a confession of the faith which is confessed at this altar, **any who are not yet instructed**, are in doubt, or who hold a confession differing from that of this congregation and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and yet desire to receive the Sacrament, **are asked first to speak to one of the pastors.**

Prayer Before Divine Service

O Lord, my creator, redeemer, and comforter, as I come to worship You in spirit and in truth, I humbly pray that You would open my heart to the preaching of Your Word so that I may repent of my sins, believe in Jesus Christ as my only Savior, and grow in grace and holiness. Hear me for the sake of His name. Amen.

+ In the Name of Jesus +

Prelude

To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord -- Robert Lind

Greeting

P "Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;"

C "worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness."

- Psalm 29:2

Confession and Absolution

Stand

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

P If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

P Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

C Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Service of the Word

Entrance Hymn:

402 The Only Son from Heaven

(all stanzas)

Kyrie

LSB 204



C Lord, have mer - cy; Christ, have mer-cy; Lord, have mer - cy.

Gloria in Excelsis

LSB 204



C 1 To God on high be glo - ry And peace to all the earth;
2 To You, O sole-be - got - ten, The Fa - ther's Son, we pray;
3 For You a - lone are ho - ly; You on - ly are the Lord.



Good-will from God in heav - en Pro - claimed at Je - sus' birth!
O Lamb of God, our Sav - ior, You take our sins a - way.
For - ev - er and for - ev - er, Be wor - shipped and a - dored;



We praise and bless You, Fa - ther; Your ho - ly name, we sing—
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus; Re - ceive our heart - felt cry,
You with the Ho - ly Spir - it A - lone are Lord Most High,



Our thanks for Your great glo - ry, Lord God, our heav'n-ly King.
Where You in pow'r are seat-ed At God's right hand on high—
In God the Fa - ther's glo - ry. "A - men!" our glad re - ply.

Text: Stephen P. Starke

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 43:1-7

¹But now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
³For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Cush and Seba in exchange for you.
⁴Because you are precious in my eyes,
and honored, and I love you,
I give men in return for you,
peoples in exchange for your life.
⁵Fear not, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you.
⁶I will say to the north, Give up,
and to the south, Do not withhold;
bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the end of the earth,
⁷everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Psalm

(Psalm 29; antiphon v.3)



P The voice of the LORD is over the | waters;*
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD, over many | waters.

Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly | beings,*
ascribe to the LORD glo- | ry and strength.

C **Ascribe to the LORD the glory | due his name;***
worship the LORD in the splendor of | holiness.

P The voice of the LORD is over the | waters;*
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD, over many | waters.

C **The voice of the LORD is | powerful;***
the voice of the LORD is full of | majesty.

P The voice of the LORD breaks the | cedars;*
the LORD breaks the cedars of | Lebanon.

C **He makes Lebanon to skip | like a calf,***
and Sirion like a young | wild ox.

P The voice | of the LORD*
flashes forth | flames of fire.

C **The voice of the LORD shakes the | wilderness;***
the LORD shakes the wilderness | of Kadesh.

P The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth
and strips the | forests bare,*
and in his temple all cry, | "Glory!"

C **The LORD sits enthroned o- | ver the flood;***
the LORD sits enthroned as king for- | ever.

P May the LORD give strength to his | people!*
May the LORD bless his people | with peace!

The voice of the LORD is over the | waters;*
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD, over many | waters.

C **Glory be to the Father and | to the Son***

and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning;
is now, and will be forever. | Amen

Epistle

Romans 6:1–11

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?
²By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

Alleluia and Verse



C Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



C These things are writ - ten that you may be - lieve that



Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.



Holy Gospel

Luke 3:15–22

- P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the third chapter.
- C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹⁵As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, ¹⁶John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. ¹⁹But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reprovved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, ²⁰added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

²¹Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, ²²and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

- P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C** **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Apostles' Creed

- C** **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life † everlasting. Amen.**

Sit

Children's Message

Hymn of the Day: 407 To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord

(all stanzas)

Sermon

"Fire"

(Isaiah 43:1-7, Romans 6:1-11, & Luke 3:15-22)

Pastor Espinosa

In the Name of Jesus. Amen. If you've been watching any of the reporting about the fires, then you've heard the adjectives to describe what has occurred, "crazy, heart-breaking, apocalyptic, nuke-zone, warzone, nightmarish." One resident being interviewed said, "Pacific Palisades is gone." And no one accused him of exaggerating as over 5,300 structures have been destroyed.

Zooming in from the view from afar, there were those who gave more personal perspectives: "My childhood home is gone, burned to the ground alongside the homes of almost everyone else I grew up with in the Pacific Palisades, I think. I can only guess because almost no one can navigate the narrow, winding roads to check. The fires are still burning, or the smoke is too thick, or the power lines are too tangled. The howling angry wind is so loud you can hear it through the television screen. Which was all I was able to witness this through. That and my phone. My godforsaken phone that never stops buzzing and that I can't put down. 'This is bad' the messages read. 'Someone saw my street burning on ABC7,' says another. 'Our home is gone.' 'My parents' home, too.' 'There's nothing left.' 'Your elementary school is gone.' 'So is your home.' *My home.*" (MSNBC, "What it feels like watching your childhood

neighborhood burn to the ground: Pacific Palisades really does look like a warzone right now or the apocalypse," Katy Tur, January 9, 2025)

How are we to react? Our LORD gives us a direct answer in St. Luke's gospel:

Repent or Perish

13 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. ⁴Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

Not that it isn't important to address other important issues (water supply or the fact that 90% of all fires are caused by people), and assuredly address the real practical needs of so many people now displaced, especially those without insurance (though even among those with insurance, talk about a process that must now ensue) – in fact, we must be ready to help – but let's begin with you and me and our faith. The first thing to do in the face of calamity and disaster is to repent, to turn from our own sin, and turn back toward God.

There are many reasons to repent, but the big one is that we are reminded of how much of ourselves are invested in our dwellings and the other physical resources and buildings connected to what we do in our lives. All of them are subject to what has occurred throughout the history of civilization: impressive structures that were then subject to tsunami, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, flooding, fire, avalanche, volcano...and the list goes on. Sometimes destruction comes from – and here we are again – other people.

Jesus Foretells Destruction of the Temple

13 And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" ²And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

Our LORD predicted the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem that would come at the hands of the Romans. And it won't surprise you what is included in the historical details of the city's destruction: fire.

Josephus: "While the temple was in flames, the [Romans] stole everything they could lay their hands on, and slaughtered all who were caught. No pity was shown to age or rank... As the flames roared up, and since the temple stood on a hill, it seemed as if the whole city were ablaze. The noise was deafening, with war cries of the legions, howls of the rebels surrounded by fire and sword, and the shrieks of the people." (*Josephus: The Essential Writings*, 361)

The destruction of Jerusalem was by all accounts horrific, but God's Word also associates fire with the vilest destruction:

Matthew 25:41: "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

Matthew 3:12: ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Revelation 20:10a, 14 & 15: "and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire... ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

Again, how are we to react? Fire is terrifying. It is terrible here, and as it is presented beyond death, it is infinitely worse. How are we to react? Once again: repentance. Repentance: turning from sin and turning toward God. Why turn from sin when confronted by fire? Because our sin makes us mis-treat, misconstrue, and mis-handle what is here in front of our eyes.

This is where we proceed with great care. We are called also to be good stewards: to care for the things God calls us to care for and that includes our homes. Caring for one's house is an extension of service in the kingdom, especially when you understand your home as a gift to be shared. In the early church for example, the homes of Christians were extended sanctuaries for other Christians who traveled. Furthermore, homes in the early church were center points for ministry. Uhlhorn elaborates:

"[In the third century] institutions did not exist. There was no need of houses of hospitality, houses for foreigners, orphanages, hospitals, so long as every Christian house was an asylum for traveling brothers, and every Christian man and woman was ready to receive the indigent." (*Christian Charity in the Ancient Church*, 123)

Thus, the LORD Jesus did not hesitate to include in His list of characteristics of His sheep who will be brought safely to His right hand at the great judgment that among the things they did was, **"...I was a stranger and you welcomed me."** (Matthew 25:25c)

Thus, the Christian will care for their home, because the home makes the Christian better equipped to serve their neighbor, beginning of course, with their own families. Luther attributed the list in Matthew 25 being first applicable towards one's own children. Homes are schools, hospitals, counseling centers, and spiritual retreats. Should a Christian grieve to lose such a resource to a fire? There would be something wrong with that Christian who didn't, but as you can see here, we are putting things in perspective.

The structure itself is not your life. And this is why fire is very much kept in perspective and as for its destructive forces – for the Christian – is kept at bay. God still speaks through the prophetic record in Isaiah:

Israel's Only Savior

43 But now thus says the Lord,

he who created you, O Jacob,

he who formed you, O Israel:

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

²

When you pass through the waters, I will be with

you;

and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,

and the flame shall not consume you."

That is, you will not be destroyed in calamitous fire. This too requires understanding. In the instance of the three young men in Daniel, we read of a miracle in Daniel 3:

¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

¹⁹Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. ²⁰And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. ²¹Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. ²²Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. ²³And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." ²⁵He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

The LORD entered the fiery furnace with the three young men. The LORD was the fourth one, but what I want to bring out here was what the three young men said to the king before they were thrown into the fiery furnace: "...our God whom we serve is able to deliver us...But if not...we will [STILL] not serve your gods or worship the golden image...". (Daniel 3:17-18)

The three young men were confident regardless of how it turned out, they would not – ultimately – be destroyed. They knew what Isaiah had said was true, ***"the flame shall not consume you."*** (Isaiah 43:2)

Polycarp of Smyrna was the disciple of St. John the Apostle and became a bishop in the Church. He lived during the policy of Emperor Trajan in A.D. 155, and while "Christians were not sought out...if they were accused and they refused to worship the gods, they had to be punished."

Polycarp was accused and arrested. He stood before the proconsul at his trial. "When the judge threatened him with burning him alive, Polycarp simply answered that the fire that the judge could light would last only a moment, whereas the eternal fire would never go out. Finally, we are told that after he was tied to the post in the pyre, he looked up and prayed out loud: 'Lord Sovereign God...I thank you that you have deemed me worthy of this moment, so that, jointly with your martyrs, I may have a share in the cup of Christ... For this ... I bless and glorify you. Amen.'" (Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, Vol. 1, 43-44)

Which is to say, Polycarp, though killed by fire, was not destroyed by fire. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, he did not die in fear but died in faith.

How does such a life reach you and me? We cannot attain it. We cannot climb a mountain to reach it. We cannot discipline ourselves and will it into being. We are incapable of producing this life in ourselves. The sin which makes us worthy of the lake of fire, we cannot overcome. And this is why the baptism of our LORD Jesus becomes so important to us Christians.

Baptism is a conjoining. It is a unionizing. It is a combining, a unification, a making of two into one. When the people came repenting of their sin (remember repentance is how we must respond to the terrible fires; as we too deserve to lose – on account of our sin – to lose it all), they came repenting to be baptized. They came to be joined to God's salvation. They came to be one with His love and mercy.

They were joined to God's grace, and His forgiveness. John the Baptist knew this lucidly, so he was there receiving sinner after sinner, so needless to say, when Christ came to be baptized, John was somewhat beside himself: *"how could this be, the pure Lamb of God, the sinless Savior...He needs no baptism, because He needs no repentance, because He has no sin...He does not need to come to me, but I need to come to Him."*

But Jesus insisted. He too was baptized. Though Jesus was always sinless, at the point of His baptism, He attached Himself to the sins of the world. This was public acceptance of the mission the Heavenly Father sent Him for: to save the world from fire. How would Jesus do it? By entering our

sin and the fire it deserves. And by doing this Christians like you and me would gain a new relationship with fire.

Isaiah also proclaimed that we would be saved from the waters. We are through a new water, the water of Holy Baptism. Isaiah also proclaimed that we would be saved from the fires. We are through a new fire. Water and fire are not only destructive, but they are also preserving and saving. Christ has conducted a great reversal for these as well. Now we are baptized by the Holy Spirit and with fire. For us, the fire of God is a refining fire. It purifies our faith so that by the grace of God, we do not "continue in sin that grace may abound" (Romans 6:1) This is a refining fire for faith to crucify our old self, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. (Romans 6:6) For us baptized into Christ, sin no longer has dominion over us, fire has lost its edge to destroy, since we have already died to sin and are now alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:11)

This new life through refining fire and the work of the Holy Spirit causes us to view everything differently now: yes, our properties are important and even precious as resources for serving our neighbors, but we are not defined by them. "But as it is, [the people of God] desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city." (Hebrews 11:10)

What has God done about the fire and the fires which cause us to repent? He has sent His Son who entered our flames. As we are now joined to Him and He to us, fire has a new meaning. Our faith is refined so that here we have nothing to fear, so that here we live to love our neighbors, so that here, we counter what destroys with that which now refines as the life of Jesus continues to overcome death in the world. His life is in you Christians. Let us live in His holy water and fire with great confidence.

Stand

Prayer of the Church

- P** In peace, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the baptized people of God, that strengthened by His Holy Spirit we would walk as the new and holy people He has declared us to be in Christ, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For all church workers, especially Matthew, our Synod president; _____, our district president; and _____, our pastor(s), that the Lord would prosper the good work of preaching the Gospel and administering the life-giving Sacraments, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the family, especially all Christian homes; for husbands and wives, that God would turn them toward one another in love; for fathers and mothers, that God would equip them for their holy duty as teachers of the faith; and for all children, that God would preserve them in the saving faith and certain promises of their Baptism unto life everlasting, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the rulers of the nations, [*especially* _____,] that they would submit to the preaching of God's Word and acknowledge Jesus as the Christ and true King, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For who find themselves in times of weakness, illness, despair and death, [*especially* _____,] that God would grant healing and relief according to His will; and that He would give us every aid of His Holy Spirit to endure afflictions and find comfort in the healing wounds of the Savior, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For all the baptized who partake of the Lord's Supper today, that God would give us tender hearts to confess our need and rejoice in His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P Lord God, heavenly Father, You manifested Yourself with the Holy Spirit in the fullness of grace at the Baptism of Your dear Son. With Your voice, You directed us to the One who has borne our sins, that we may receive grace and forgiveness. Keep us, we implore You, in the true faith. Since we have been baptized in accordance with Your command and the example of Your Son, strengthen our faith by Your Holy Spirit and lead us to everlasting life and salvation; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

Offering Andante Religioso -- Felix Mendelssohn

+Dismissal of Online Participants and Blessing+

1 Corinthians 11:23-29 instructs pastors since they are stewards of the mysteries (1st Corinthians 4:1) to serve only those who share in a common confession. If you are still learning about our confession and not yet confirmed, you may come forward to receive a blessing. Simply cross your arms over your chest. Pastor would love to meet with you to prepare you to receive the Holy Sacrament.

Service of the Sacrament

Stand

Preface

LSB 208

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.

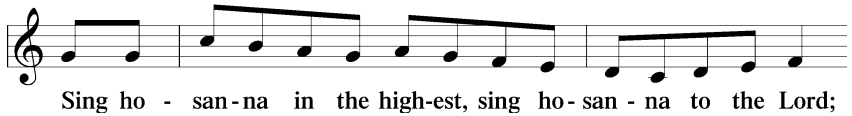
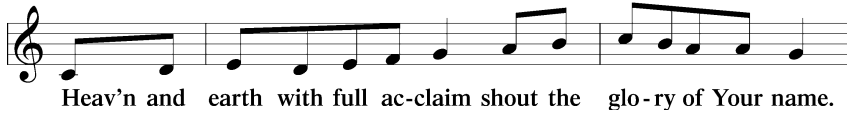
P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

LSB 208



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;



Text: Stephen P. Starke

Prayer of Thanksgiving

- P** Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

As the glory of Your presence once filled Your ancient temple, so in the incarnation of Your Son, Jesus Christ, You manifested the fullness of Your glory in human flesh.

We give You thanks that in His most Holy Supper You reveal Your glory to us. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood so that we may one day behold Your glory face to face.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

Lord's Prayer

- C** **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.

The Words of Our Lord

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My † body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My † blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pax Domini

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

G Amen.

Agnus Dei

LSB 210




G 1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,



You take the sin of the world a - way;
You take the sin of the world a - way;



O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,



Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

Text: Stephen P. Starke

Sit

Distribution

Distribution Hymns:

601 All Who Believe and Are Baptized *(all stanzas)*

590 Baptized into Your Name Most Holy *(all stanzas)*

411 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light *(all stanzas)*

Stand

Nunc Dimittis

LSB 211

1 O Lord, now let Your ser - vant De -
2 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, All
part in heav'n - ly peace, For I have seen the
glo - ry to the Son, All glo - ry to the
glo - ry Of Your re - deem - ing grace:
Spir - it, For - ev - er Three in One;
A light to lead the Gen - tiles Un -
For as in the be - gin - ning, Is
to Your ho - ly hill, The glo - ry of Your
now, shall ev - er be, God's tri - une name re -
peo - ple, Your cho - sen Is - ra - el.
sound - ing Through all e - ter - ni - ty.

Post-Communion Collect

A Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would

strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Benedicamus

LSB 212

A Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

C Amen.

Postlude

Toccata -- Dieterich Buxtehude

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Four from Lutheran Service Book

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Announcements

Worship Attendance Form for Members & Guests



Please scan the QR code to fill in an attendance form, or you may fill out an attendance card located in the seatbacks in sanctuary.



GUESTS, please sign our guestbook at the entrance table.

Offerings will be collected during the worship service.

Guests, please note that offerings are always voluntary.

Updated Process for Requesting Announcements



We are updating the process for sending out announcements to the congregation and our community. If you would like an announcement created, you can now submit a request to the Office Administrator, Jackie Johnson, using the form at this link or scan the QR code:



<https://forms.office.com/r/Hsgrm6zAup>

You will be able to choose whether you want your announcement in the bulletin, email, website, livestream, and more

Daily Devotionals for Reading Through The Holy Bible in 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last Sunday, I encouraged you to join me for the wonderful New Year's resolution to read the entire Bible in 2025.

I will present these devotionals — The LORD permitting — every day on:

- Facebook @ "Alfonso Espinosa"
- TikTok "@alfonsoespinosa356"
- Instagram "@alfonsoespinosa88"

I will also be making these available via email. Let me know if you want to be added to the mailing list.

Let us rejoice that God has revealed how He will keep our faith in Christ strong in 2025: through His Word!

In Your Service and To Christ's Glory,
Pastor Espinosa



Congregational Meeting- Sunday, January 26th

Mark your calendars! Our next congregational voters' meeting will be held on Sunday, January 26th, after Divine Service and a brief fellowship period. This meeting will provide an opportunity for the congregation to review our 2025 budget.

Please consider joining us for this important discussion about our congregation's fiscal needs.



Year End Annual Report – Available Now!



ANNUAL REPORT

Pastor Espinosa has virtually sent out the "Year End Annual Report" for St. Paul's. If you would prefer a hard copy, they are available on the welcome table. If you did not receive a virtual copy and would like one, please email our Administrative Coordinator, Jackie Johnson, at office@saintpaulsirvine.com.

The Bulletin Board



Life Quote: "From the moment you were being knitted together in your mother's womb (Psalm 139:13), God's began His careful construction of His chosen jewel of redemption." *Rev. Adam Osier, Dean, Free Lutheran Bible College, Plymouth, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

Weekly Stewardship Message: Matthew 3:15 – "But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.'" Fulfilling all righteousness is not a task we are up to. The reason God sent His Son into the world is to fulfill all righteousness for us, to do what we could not do. The whole of Jesus' life, everything He did and said, was one great offering to the Father in our stead to fulfill all righteousness for us. With our righteousness fulfilled in Jesus and given to us in Baptism, our hearts now overflow with thanksgiving and praise.

We are Seeking More Volunteers to Serve the Congregation



We are seeking volunteers for ***Ushers, Altar Guild, Welcome Table*** and ***transportation services*** and visiting shut-ins. Please let Mark Kuntz know if you are interested. We need additional volunteers for: ***Livestream, Family Sunday School, Quilting & Fellowship Team.***

Please speak to Pastor Espinosa if you might be able to help with these.

Thank you to all our current, amazing volunteers. You are appreciated!

Opportunities to Study God's Word:

1. "Journey Through the Parables"

Our "Journey Through the Parables" Bible Study will continue today after the worship service and a brief fellowship time with Parable #12. Please consider joining us for this study!



2. Young Adults Group – "Lamplight"

Lamplight is a group of young adults between the ages of 18-23 that aims to study God's Word in an engaging yet traditional format of Vespers! Come join us as we read, sing, and meditate upon His Word. The fun doesn't stop there – join us for fellowship after every meeting and our occasional bonding outings! Lamplight meets every second and fourth Sunday at 4pm in the fellowship hall at Light of Christ Lutheran Church in Irvine.

For any questions or information, please contact:
Shane Perry at (949) 400-6426 or
shaneperryca@gmail.com or
Instagram: @lamplight_youngadults



3. Wednesday Bible Studies

We will meet **THIS Wednesday, January 15th** with Hebrews Chapter 8. We will be meeting at 10 am and 7:15 pm in our church offices. You may come in person or join us via TEAMS fully interactive.

4. The Chosen Bible Study Groups

St. Paul's now has two *The Chosen* Bible Study groups that meet once per month. If you are interested in the next meeting, please speak to Pastor.

- Group #1: Will be meeting 1/25 at Bill and Ali Franks house, please talk with Pastor Espinosa for more information or to join the group.
- Group #2: Will be meeting 1/18 at Ed and Laura Millers house, please talk with Pastor Espinosa for more information or to join the group.

5. Confirmation Class for Youth

Next Confirmation Class is to be determined. More information coming soon.

6. "Iron Sharpens Iron"

This will be a men's Bible Study starting on ZOOM Saturday, January 18th at 12 pm. We will start with the Large Catechism. Contact Jacob Thornblad at jacobi1998@gmail.com for more information or to join.

Light of the World Podcast- Join us online:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SaintPaulsIrvine YouTube:
www.youtube.com/SaintPaulsIrvine



**LIGHT OF THE WORLD
PODCAST**

APPLE PODCASTS
SPOTIFY
AMAZON MUSIC
AUDIBLE

ALSO ON YouTube
[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/@SAINTPAULSIRVINE](https://www.youtube.com/@saintpaulsirvine)

Circle of Friends



For those we care about to come to saving faith and have a church home.
Have a friend who needs prayer or would like a meeting with pastor?
Use this QR code to let us know!



More comfortable with pen and paper?
Paper forms are available on the entrance table.

Words of Evangelism

Ch. 3 - Death and Guilt

From the Evangelism Committee. There are three points you should remember when the opportunity to share the Gospel presents itself. First, death and guilt are universal problems. Second, there are two religions in the world; Christianity and all others. Third, remember the Gospel. Christ has died for you and your sins and gives you eternal life. Let's talk about this first point, death and guilt are universal problems. Concerning guilt, we can ask others if they have upheld their own moral standard. Most people, if they are truly honest with themselves, will acknowledge they have not upheld theirs. Most people will acknowledge they have guilt. "There is none who does good, not even one." (Ps 53:3) "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin." (Rom 3:20) Here, Paul identifies that the Law serves as a mirror that reflects our own sin back to us and makes it plain. With this in mind, there are some great questions you can ask somebody while trying to engage them about Christianity. Have you upheld your own moral standard? Do you feel guilty about something you have done? Do you have regrets? Concerning death, people fear death and grieve at the loss of a loved one. "It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment." (Heb 9:27) A great thing to proclaim to somebody to get their attention is to tell them that they are going to die. Remembering that death and guilt are universal problems and thinking of questions to ask about these points cut through to the heart of the matter. They help cut through the chaff so that you can proclaim the Gospel to those who need it. For the Gospel tells us that Jesus Christ

died for our sins so that our sins and regret no longer bring us death but life.

Lord God, we confess before you that we have a heart and flesh problem. Our sin is ever before us and leaves us humbled. We have sinned by not loving you, o God, before all other things and by not loving our neighbor as ourselves. We plea with you, o God, to remember your promises that you gave us through Christ. For the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, our Lord, forgive us our sins. Amen.

Classical Academy Update

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we continue to conduct important preliminary work before we begin the feasibility study with LCEF including the goal to raise all 60K before the study begins. We have two sub-committees formed within the exploratory team: 1) is working on Mission and Vision for the school that also envisions both a donor brochure and family brochure as well as a potential website for scanning interest about our potential school. We want to know who might support us in the community even before the LCEF study; and 2) the other sub-committee is researching potential grant applications through various foundations and other organizational entities. Here, we are taking a broad approach and have a long list of potential income sources. Obviously, we are not applying for anything at this time but learning about what is required and using this information about how to potentially best go forward. In addition, we desire to do research on the one other Christian elementary school in Irvine (Bethel Classical Academy) serving the Korean community. It is actually great news that they exist as they demonstrate the potentiality of space for a school within the city limits. Please remember what this potential venture is all about: 1) The Great Commission to make disciples, for those who have not yet heard the saving Gospel of Christ; 2) The growth of our St. Paul's congregation; and 3) Offering an educational alternative emphasizing these aspects:

- The goal is holistic formation, not only the mind, but the spirit to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Not only to learn the faith, but to be equipped to defend it through an intentional Christian apologetics curriculum.
- Daily chapels.
- Developing critical thinking (not simply *what* to think, but *how* to think).
- Teaching the classical languages, especially Latin.
- Teaching sacred music.
- Developing the worldview and life mission that we are not here for ourselves, but to serve God and others by being reflectors of the light of Christ.

In Your Service and To Christ's Glory,

Pastor Espinosa

P.S. If any of you would like to join the *Lux et Veritas* team, please let pastor know



**Please pray for our Missionaries
Council Members & Elders**



St. Paul's is helping to support these missionaries with financial gifts to the national synod annually:

- Rev. Daniel and Kathy Conrad
- Serving the Lord in the Dominican Republic
- Erin Mackenzie
- Serving the Lord in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region
- Britt Odemba
- Serving the Lord in Kenya
- Rev. Dr. Tom Park
- Serving the Lord in Taiwan

St. Paul's has formed friendships with these missionaries and are not currently supporting them financially:

- Tirzah Krey, Regional Human Care Coordinator
- Serving the Lord in the Latin America and Caribbean Region
- St. Paul's also supports our local evangelist Rev. Mark Jasa.

Please pray for our Church Leaders:

Our Parish Council members and Elders are so appreciated. Please pray that God grant them strength and bless their ministry to our church:

St. Paul's Parish Council Members:

- Debbie Dannemeyer – President
- Matt Bures – Recording Secretary

- Ken Mott – Treasurer
- Laura Miller – Financial Secretary
- Jon Rutherford – Trustee Director
- Ali Frank – Stewardship Director
- Mark Kuntz – Presiding Elder
- Renee Mott – Fellowship Director
- Bradley Hustad – Evangelism Director
- Jacob Thornblad – Education Director
- Miles & Jackie Johnson – Youth Director

St. Paul's Elders:

Mark Kuntz (Presiding Elder), Bruce Dannemeyer, Bryan Kilduff, John Church, Jon Steele, Karl Blanke, Michael Padilla, Steve Fischer, Ricky Cuenca, Alex Padilla

Message from your President and Head Elder

This Advent and Christmas we celebrate the coming of our Savior and reflect on the many gifts that God has given us. Among them is our St. Paul's thriving community of believers.

As we end our first full year at the Concordia University Spectrum campus, we continue to learn how to best use what the Lord has given us. Our ministries are growing, we have new members joining us, we are connecting with our youth, our Sunday School and VBS have expanded. In addition, we have updated our website, started in-person mid-week bible studies, continued monthly podcasts, initiated efforts to reach out to the community through Lutheran Classical Education, supported missions, and so much more. Through all this, we have kept our expenses to a minimum, recognizing our growing budget deficit.

To address our budget deficit, we initiated bulletin financial updates to keep you informed. We know that we need to do more to make giving easier. Some of us, including your President, have not updated our automated giving for some time! To this end, here are some tools you can use for end of the year giving:

1. For one time contributions: To give online, you can go to our website and click on the "Give " link halfway down the home page. Or go directly to our giving page:

<https://saintpaulsirvine.org/pages/giving/>

2. To update automated giving: Go to <https://saintpaulsirvine.org/pages/giving/> From here login in to use your saved information and edit recurring gifts as desired. If you have a guess as to which email you used to sign up, you can enter it into the login page. On the login screen, if they don't know their password, they can use the "reset password" link to reset it. If anyone runs into issues with the process, please email it.admin@saintpaulsirvine.com

3. For guests and worship service contributions-- we added offering envelopes to the seatbacks in the sanctuary. If you prefer to give in person this is a great option for you. Offering will be collected during the worship service. The Lord has placed us in Irvine to expand his kingdom, and we are confident that He will provide.

So, if God has blessed you in a special way this year, please prayerfully consider using one of the tools listed above to adjust your giving. Either way, we are grateful for all of you. Your volunteer and helpful spirit is inspiring and motivating.

Thank you for reading this message. We pray for blessings on you and those you love as we wait for the coming of our Savior!

Debbie Dannemeyer and Mark Kuntz



Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

Psalm 95:1

Choir Schedule for February 2025

- ♪ **Sunday, Feb. 2:** Rehearsal before church at 8:30 am
- ♪ **Sunday, Feb. 9:** Rehearsal before church at 8:30 am
- ♪ **Sunday, Feb. 9:** Sing for Divine Service at 9:30 am

Rehearsal on 2/2 will be in the cafeteria area by the piano.
Rehearsal on 2/9 will be in the Sanctuary. ***Please be prompt!***

Sheet music PDFs and recordings of the music, including the individual parts, are now on the "Choir" page of the church website. Questions? Contact Mark Howard (714) 423-6460 or markahoward@sbcglobal.net.

SERVICE TEAM SCHEDULE

Date	Altar Team	Ushers/ Greeters	Elders on Duty	Entrance Area	Livestream
<i>Service Team Chairs</i>	<i>Mei Kuntz</i>	<i>Mark Kuntz</i>	<i>Mark Kuntz</i>	<i>Kiu Geisler</i>	<i>Jon Steele</i>
2 nd Sunday 1/12/2025	Mei Kuntz, Elizabeth Brothwell	Don and Elizabeth Brothwell	Mike Padilla	Myra Taylor	Shane Perry
3 rd Sunday 1/19/2025	Ali Frank, Laura Miller	Bill Frank and Ed Miller	Bryan Kilduff, Mark Kuntz	Cindy Kilduff	Jon Steele
4 th Sunday 1/26/2025	Jeanette Dahlin, A. Wright	Don and Elizabeth Brothwell	John Church, Jon Steele	Anne Wright	Jon Steele
1 st Sunday 2/2/2025	Nina Mueller, Myra Taylor	Barney Wright, Miles Johnson	Alex Padilla, Bruce Dannemeyer	Kiu Geisler	Jim J.

FELLOWSHIP ROTATION

2 nd Sunday 1/12/2025	Espinosa's
3 rd Sunday 1/19/2025	Jeanette Dahlin, Mary Seltzer
4 th Sunday 1/26/2025	Gary & Daisy Minter, Renee Mott
1 st Sunday 2/2/2025	Liana Padilla, Nancy Howard