

Welcome in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ!
St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Irvine (LCMS)
"The Epiphany of Our LORD" (observed)
Sunday, January 5, 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

Administrative Coordinator: Jackie Johnson

Office: 12-4 M-F; 949-599-4760

Website: www.saintpaulsirvine.com

Email: office@saintpaulsirvine.com

Concordia University Irvine – Spectrum Campus
16355 Laguna Canyon Rd
Irvine, CA 92618

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

Air from Water Music -- GF Handel

Greeting

P "May all kings fall down before him,"

C "all nations serve him!"

- Psalm 72:11

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 Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Stand

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

G Amen.

Service of the Word

Entrance Hymn: **399 The Star Proclaims the King Is Here**
(all stanzas)

Kyrie

LSB 186



G Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -
on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

Gloria in Excelsis

LSB 187



P Glory be to God on high: **G** and on earth peace, good - will toward
men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we wor - ship Thee,
we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.
O Lord God, heav'n-ly King, God the Fa-ther Al - mighty.
O Lord, the only begotten Son, Je - sus Christ;

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
 that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy up-on us.
 Thou that takest away the sin of the world, re-ceive our prayer.
 Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy up-
 on us. For Thou only art holy; Thou on-ly art the Lord.
 Thou only, O Christ, with the Ho-ly Ghost,
 art most high in the glory of God the Father. A-men.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.
C And with thy spir-it.
P Let us pray.

P O God, by the leading of a star You made known Your only-begotten Son to the Gentiles. Lead us, who know You by faith, to enjoy in heaven the fullness of Your divine presence; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



Sit

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 60:1–6

¹Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
²For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.
³And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.
⁴Lift up your eyes all around, and see;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from afar,
and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.
⁵Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and exult,
because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
⁶A 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 bring good news, the praises of the LORD.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm

Psalm 72:1–11; antiphon v. 18



P Blessèd be the LORD, the God of | Israel,*
who alone does | wondrous things.

Give the king your justice, | O God,*
and your righteousness to the | royal son!

C May he judge your people with | righteousness,*
and your poor with | justice!

P Let the mountains bear prosperity for the | people,*
and the hills, in | righteousness!

C May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the children of the | needy,*
and crush the op- | pressor!

P May they fear you while the | sun endures,*
and as long as the moon, throughout all gener- | ations!

C May he be like rain that falls on the | mown grass,*
like showers that wa- | ter the earth!

P In his days may the righteous | flourish,*
and peace abound, till the moon | be no more!

C May he have dominion from | sea to sea,*
and from the River to the ends | of the earth!

P May desert tribes bow down be- | fore him*
and his enemies | lick the dust!

C May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands
render him | tribute;*

may the kings of Sheba and Seba | bring gifts!

P May all kings fall down be- | fore him,*
all nations | serve him!

Blessèd be the LORD, the God of | Israel,*
who alone does | wondrous things.

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

Ephesians 3:1–12

¹For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—
²assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was
given to me for you, ³how the mystery was made known to me by revelation,
as I have written briefly. ⁴When you read this, you can perceive my insight into
the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to the sons of men in other
generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by
the Spirit. ⁶This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the
same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace,
which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸To me, though I am the very
least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the
unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to bring to light for everyone what is the
plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, ¹⁰so that
through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to
the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was according to the
eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we
have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

Alleluia

LSB 190



C Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 2:1–12

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the second chapter.



C Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord.

¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the
king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, "Where is he
who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have
come to worship him." ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and
all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the
people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him,
"In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

⁶“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” ⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



C Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

Nicene Creed

C I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven

**and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the
dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and
glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ✠ of the world to come. Amen.**

Sit

Children's Message

Hymn of the Day: 395 O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright

(all stanzas)

Sermon

"Wise Only by God's Grace"

(Matthew 2:1-12)

Pastor Espinosa

Introduction: Popular images that don't quite represent Scripture. Case and point: The Epiphany "Kings" or "Wise Men" who followed the star.

- A. Calling them "kings" is something that did not occur until the 6th century; calling them "wise" did not occur until the 8th century! (Gibbs, Concordia Commentary: Matthew 1:1-11:1, 123-124)**
- B. But our cultural images have built up these popular ideas about the magi who came to pay homage and adoration towards the baby Jesus (who was about two years old and was now being raised in the house of Joseph and Mary). This also corrects our typical "manger scenes": the magi never made it to the manger but traveled for many months to see the baby Jesus when much time passed after His birth. So the shepherds worshipped at the**

manger, but the magi bowed down before Christ in the humble home of Joseph and Mary many months after the birth of Christ.

- C. In the typical manger scene, we have the poor shepherds and then the elaborate magi right there with them, but the biblical evidence states that the magi arrived long after the shepherds and furthermore Scripture will not let us be too terribly impressed with the magi.
- D. Magi were often servants of rulers who oppressed the people of Israel as we seemingly have depicted in the book of Daniel. They were most certainly not kings, but again, servants.
- E. Furthermore, any good Israelite would never admire their so-called “wisdom.” Ancient astronomy -- astrology -- was often associated with the occult. From a Jewish perspective, this was a form of false and idolatrous knowledge and learning. For the people of God at the time, this would be something to be shunned.
- F. But even more fundamentally disturbing is that these magi were Gentiles...they were outsiders in relation to the people of God...they did not belong in association with the Holy Messiah!
- G. So, who were the magi...they were not really kings, but servants; they were not really wise, but were known for occult science; and they were not even among God’s people, but Gentiles! How much should these men – in terms of their own persons and credentials – be admired? Not at all! And yet...these are the ones who came seeking Christ!

Part I: These Outsiders; these Occult Sinners; These Servants of Oppressors are the Ones Who Came Seeking Christ!

- A. St. Matthew is writing to Jews, and he is undoubtedly putting them to shame because it was not the Israelites who sought to worship the Christ child, but Gentile sinners! But as this is recorded in Holy Scripture, we too are being convicted for our sin which keeps us from seeking out the Christ to worship Him.
- B. There is, however, a great lesson to be learned. Luther writes about the situation here presented to us: “Him whom His own would not seek or acknowledge...[but] this strange, foreign people...That was truly a great disgrace for the entire Jewish land and people that Christ was born in the midst of them and they should first learn of it from strange, heathen, foreign

people.” (Kretzmann, Popular Commentary of the Bible, New Testament Volume I, 9)

- C. But understand that when you hear a commentary like this, teachers like Luther are in fact warning against the sinful nature that is every one of us regardless of our nationality and ethnicity.
- D. We see in Jerusalem our own sinful problem. “Jerusalem has had the Word for ages and, when it learns of Bethlehem through the magi, responds not at all. From Jerusalem comes only an attempt to murder the Messiah. (Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel, 73)”
- E. We mirror Jerusalem and the Israelites at the time according to our sinful nature when Christ is in the very midst of us and yet we are unresponsive because we are too busy chasing the things of this world. Shame on them. Shame on us. We too are sinners as they were sinners.
- F. And yet from their perspective, the magi were greater sinners still. Again, remember that these served oppressors of God’s people, they were outside occult practitioners...what are they doing in Jerusalem?!
- G. They are in Jerusalem to show the ways of God:
 - 1. Some 30 years after the magi, John the Baptist would preach:
“And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. (Mt 3:9)”
 - 2. And after John the Baptist, Jesus Himself taught in the Parable of the Wedding Feast: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, **but they would not come...**Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find. (Mt 22:2 & 9)”

- H. That is, God does not need us. He wants us. He loves us. He calls us, but He does not need us. If we will not be faithful children of God, God can make faithful children from stones. If we do not respond to His great invitation to the wedding feast, He will go out to the main roads and find others. We are being warned in this Epiphany text that a great light has come into our midst, but the question is put before us, “How will we respond?” Will we seek Christ as the Magi did? Or will we drown out God’s great call to us through our i-phones, i-pads, earphones, and plasma, LCD, LED flat screens?
- I. The point is that when you see the magi in Scripture or in those manger scenes which if they include the magi should still be set out in our homes esp. since only now has Epiphany arrived – but when you see these magi, we should be humbled: sinful, occult-practicing, outside of God’s people, servants of oppressors were called to seek Jesus! Are we doing the same?

Part II: But Don’t Despair, God Gave Those Magi A Lot of Help! He Gives You a Lot of Help as Well!

- A. The magi are also quite simply pictures of God’s grace given to poor sinners.
- B. We simply do not know how much those magi knew about Jesus, but it should not surprise us if the word of the Old Testament prophets had somehow reached them (Chrysostom believed as much, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Ia, Matthew 1-13, 22). But what we know beyond a shadow of a doubt is that the Lord sent them an amazing miracle in the star of Bethlehem. Impressive studies have been conducted on the star of Bethlehem includes stunning historical and astronomical research that gives at the end of the day a natural (albeit extremely rare) explanation for the phenomenon of the star that is here described. Many people find these explanations to testify to God’s magnificent providence working in the cosmos and indeed what has been made reveals the invisible qualities of God (Romans 1:20), but there seems to be much more going on here.

C. “The star” says Lenski “moved as a guide; the star arrived...the star stood...It is all perfectly plain, absolutely miraculous, unlike any star that ever existed. (ibid, 68)”

D. Later, in warning the magi against Herod, God communicates to the magi in a dream (v 12).

E. God had helped these poor magi! He very likely gave them His Word in advance, He led them by a miraculous star, and He communicated to them in a dream...God’s revelation made up for their inability; God’s wisdom made up for their ignorance; God’s power made up for their weakness; and God’s grace in Christ covered their sin.

F. And led by God they bowed down to worship the King! How much do they know about Jesus? We don’t know with certainty, but I am personally drawn to Luther’s description: “Although they [the Magi] enter a poor house, find a poor young woman, with a poor child, and also there is an appearance so unlike a king that [the Magi’s] servant is more honorable and reputable, yet they are not troubled, but in great, strong, full faith they put everything out of their eyes and mind which nature with its arrogance might adduce and bring into play; they simply know the verse of the prophet and the testimony of the star and believe Him to be King, fall down, worship Him, and give presents to Him. (Kretzmann, 10)”

H. I find the discussions about how much they knew to wax cold.

I. They were being led by a miraculous star...they must have known that this child was the King of Kings and that caused them to prostrate themselves.

J. The gifts they gave were also quite simply amazing. It is easy for the scholar to say that they were simply gifts given to royalty, to a king period. But the ancient opinions in the church seem to appreciate that again much more is going on, so it is unwise for us to ignore such a great tradition:

1. Gold was given to say yes indeed Jesus was King!

2. (frankincense and myrrh were costly aromatic gums distilled from trees and much used in religious ceremonies) Now this frankincense was given Jesus because He was being confessed as God. As the frankincense rises up, so do our prayers and so does our

worship rise up to God.

3. Myrrh was given Jesus because He was destined to die when He would die on the cross for His blood to cover the sin of the magi and to cover your sin as well! Myrrh was used to prepare the dead for burial and Christ would be buried three days before His conquering death for the magi and for you.

- K. No amount of human “wisdom” could ever realize these things, but God was leading these magi. God’s revelation was overcoming what they could never know by themselves. By grace, they knew.

Part III and Conclusion: And by Grace, You Know!

- A. Your star of Bethlehem or your star of “House of Bread” (the meaning of “Bethlehem”) is the star of Christ’s house (the Church) where the Bread of Life – Jesus Himself – is here given and shines forth through His Word given to you; where the “star” of Christ’s Word and Sacrament is set before you.
- B. You too poor sinner are being led by God to worship Jesus born to save you from sin and every evil. And to borrow from Gregory the Great: “And so do we offer gold to the newborn king if we shine in his light with the brightness of the wisdom from on high. We too offer him incense if we enkindle on the altar of our hearts the thoughts of our human minds by our holy pursuits of prayer, so as to give forth a sweet smell to God by our heavenly desire. And we offer him myrrh if we mortify the vices of our bodies by our self-denial. (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament 1a, Matthew 1-13, 28)”
- C. But none of this happens without God coming to you. And He has and has led you to Christ and by His grace you worship Jesus. He is King to lead you into His Kingdom; He is God with the authority and power to forgive and grant eternal life; He died to cover your sins and then rose so that death would lose its power over you. The gifts do indeed fit Him perfectly and as we consider the poor magi with all their faults, we realize that since God had no problem embracing them, that we too are embraced and held by the King of Kings as though we were His gifts. It is true because He died for

you, and He does indeed cherish you as His very own so that now
you too are wise only by God's grace!

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and
minds in Christ Jesus.

G Amen.

Stand

Offertory

LSB 192



G Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -
way from Thy pres-ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -
tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir-it. A - men.

Sit

Offering:

Prélude sur l'Introit de l'Epiphanie -- Maurice Duruflé

Stand

Prayer of the Church

P In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

G Lord, have mercy.

P For humble and grateful hearts enlightened by the Gospel, that we would
always bow down and worship the King and willingly offer Him the most
precious gifts we have to give, let us pray to the Lord:

G Lord, have mercy.

P For the Church, that God's people may be united in doctrine, live in harmony and peace, and labor together to bring the light of Christ to those still dwelling in darkness and death, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For leaders, that they may serve honorably; for pastors and missionaries, that they may proclaim the saving truth of God's Word without fear; and for those who hear, that they may be brought to faith, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the leaders of the nations, that God would endow them with justice and fill them with wisdom, compassion and care; and that, unlike Herod, they would seek to uphold life and watch over the welfare of the governed, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For those who need the comfort of the Lord's presence, healing according to His will, relief of suffering, and an end to the terrors of mind and heart, [*especially* _____], that He would sustain the weary with His Word, the wounded with hope and the dying with peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For peace and unity among the members of Christ's Body, that we may see the day when no divisions prevent us from kneeling in the Lord's presence and receiving this blessed Sacrament, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P May Your light shine on us and bring forth the fruits of repentance in our daily lives. Give us confidence in Your Word, that we would embrace Your holy will without fear. Hear and answer us, we pray, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

+ 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

Preface

LSB 194



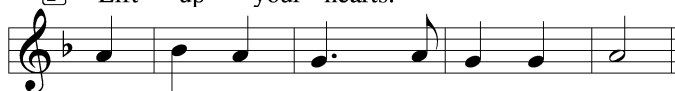
P The Lord be with you.



C And with thy spir - it.



P Lift up your hearts.



C We lift them up un - to the Lord.



P Let us give thanks un - to the Lord, our God.



C It is meet and right so to do.

P It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; for what had been hidden from before the foundation of the world You have made known to the nations in Your Son. In Him, being found in the substance of our mortal nature, You have manifested the fullness of Your glory. 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 195

C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth;
heav'n and earth are full of Thy glo - ry. Ho - san - na,
ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is He,
bless - ed is He, bless - ed is He that com - eth in the name of the Lord.
Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Lord's Prayer

LSB 179

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

LSB 197

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

LSB 197



P The peace of the Lord be with you al - ways.



G A - men.

Agnus Dei

LSB 198



O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak - est a-way the sin of the



world, have mer - cy up - on us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that



tak - est a-way the sin of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.



O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak - est a-way the sin of the



world, grant us Thy peace. A - men.

Sit

Distribution & Distribution Hymns:

825 Rise, Shine, You People (*all stanzas*)

340 Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates (*all stanzas*)

650 Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling (*all stanzas*)

Stand

Nunc Dimittis

LSB 199

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de - part in peace ac-

cord - ing to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,

which Thou hast pre - pared be - fore the face of all people,

a light to light - en the Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of Thy

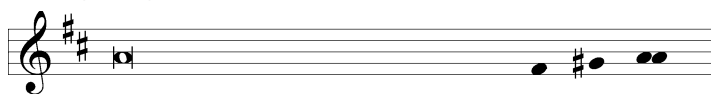
peo - ple Is - ra - el. Glo - ry be to the Father and

to the Son and to the Ho - ly Ghost; as it was in the beginning,

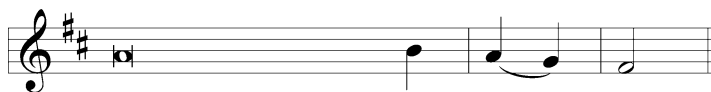
is now, and ev - er shall be, world with - out end. A - men.

Thanksgiving

LSB 200



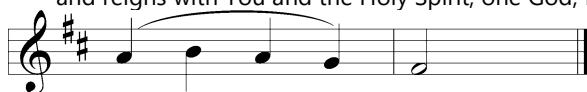
A O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,



C and His mercy endureth for - ev - er.

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 A - men.



P The Lord be with you.



C And with thy spir - it.

Benedicamus

LSB 202



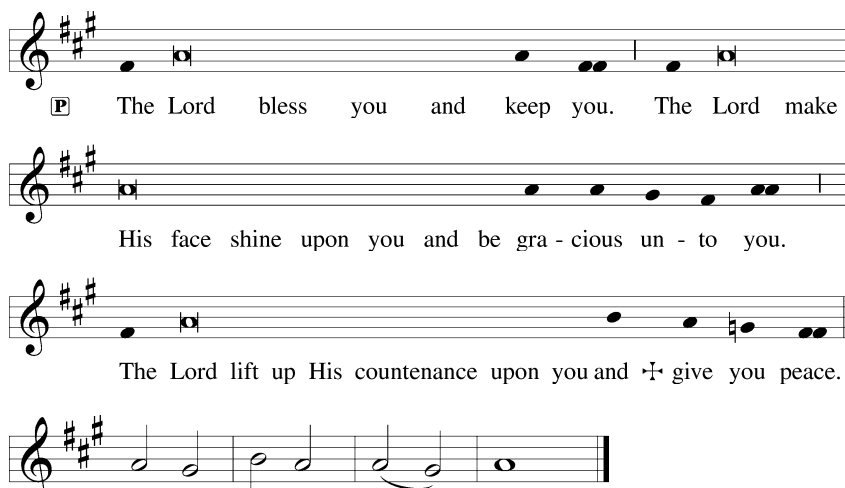
A Bless we the Lord.



C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

LSB 202



P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make
His face shine upon you and be gra - cious un - to you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

C A-men, a-men, a - men.

Postlude

Allegro Maestoso -- GF Handel

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Three 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

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 and discuss the opportunity to have a vicar serve our congregation. Please consider joining us for this important discussion about our congregation's fiscal needs.



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



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: “Let the peace of Christ change how you live—clothing yourself with godly virtues reflecting a thankful heart. Carry this peace that the angels proclaimed and Simeon saw. It sets the tone for the coming year, another year you get to live as God’s child in the peace of Jesus.”
Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org

Weekly Stewardship Message: Genesis 46:1 – “So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.” Every sacrifice in the Old Testament pointed forward to the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus upon the cross. That is the one sacrifice for sin. But the New Testament tells us to offer sacrifices as well: sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, and even to present our very bodies and selves as “living sacrifices” to the Lord.

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 #11. 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 reconvene **THIS Wednesday, January 8th** 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 Pastor Espinosa for more information or to join.

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.

Light of the World Podcast

Join us online:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SaintPaulsIrvine YouTube:

www.youtube.com/SaintPaulsIrvine



Words of Evangelism Ch. 2

Welcome from your Evangelism Committee. We want to encourage and help you to share the Gospel with your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers when God gives you the opportunity to do so. When the opportunity presents itself and you can share the Gospel, there are three points we want you to remember. You can work through a lot of stuff by getting to these three points.

First, death and guilt are universal problems. "It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment." (Heb 9:27) Regarding sin and guilt, St. Paul told us, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom 3:23-24)

Second, there are only two religions in the world. All religions, except one, tell you that you have to do works or do something. According to these religions of the Law, you have to ascend, achieve, or attain some level of goodness. The other religion is Christianity and it makes no such demands. All other religions are man-made and worship false Gods. Our God is "LORD, and there is no other, besides [him] there is no God." (Is 45:5) Our God sent Jesus Christ. And only Jesus Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life." (Jn 14:16) Through him, our

sins are forgiven so that we are no longer slaves to sin. We need not do anything to achieve some level of goodness because Christ has done it for us.

Third, remember the Gospel. Jesus Christ has died for you and your sins, and you now have eternal life. In Christ, "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses." (Ephesians 1:7) Christ's promises declare that whoever believes "has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." (Jn 5:24) Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection is the Word "that was preached to you" through which "you have been born again." (1 Pt 1:23-25) This is such good news that we must share it with others.

Lord God, we thank you for remediating our great malady of sin and death through Jesus Christ and bringing us to life. Help us remember the Gospel wherever we walk in our daily lives and instill within us a heart that desires to share the good news with others. 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

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>
1 st Sunday 1/5/2025	Nina Mueller, Myra Taylor	Barney Wright	Alex Padilla, Bruce Dannemeyer	Kiu Geisler	Jim J.
2 nd Sunday 1/12/2025	Mei Kuntz, Elizabeth Brothwell	Don and Elizabeth Brothwell	Steve Fischer	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

FELLOWSHIP ROTATION

1 st Sunday 1/5/2025	Liana Padilla, Nancy Howard
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