

Welcome in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ!
Saint Paul's Lutheran Church of Irvine (LCMS)
Advent Midweek Service

Wednesday, December 17, 2025 – 7:00 pm

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

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

Vicar: Miles Johnson

Organist: Gerald Dahlin

Choir Director: Mark Howard

Administrative Coordinator: Jackie Johnson

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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 10:30 am
 - Adult Bible Study at 11:00 am
- **Christmas Eve Service-** Wednesday, Dec 24th at 7:00 pm
- **Christmas Day Divine Service-** Thursday, Dec 25th at 9:30 am

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 on Sundays 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 Saint 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)

Prayer Before 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 +

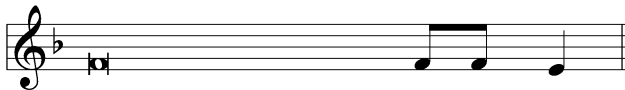
Prelude

Service of Light

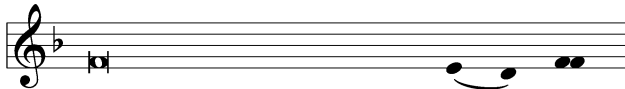
Stand



L Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,



C the light no darkness can o - ver - come.



L Stay with us, Lord, for it is eve - ning,

the u - ni - verse pro - claims Your glo - ry.

Thanksgiving for Light

LSB 245

L Blessèd are You, O Lord our God, king of the u - ni - verse,

who led Your people Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of

fire by night. Enlighten our darkness by the light of Your Christ;

may His Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;

for You are mer - ci - ful, and You love Your whole cre - a - tion

and we, Your creatures, glo - ri - fy You, Father, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it.

C A - men.

Psalmody

Psalm 141

LSB 245

C Let my prayer rise be - fore You as in - cense,

the lift - ing up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.

I O Lord, I call to You; come to me quick - ly; hear my voice

when I cry to You. **C** Let my prayer rise be - fore You as in - cense,

the lift - ing up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.

II Set a watch be - fore my mouth, O Lord, and guard the door of my lips.

I Let not my heart in - cline to an - y e - vil thing;

let me not be oc - cu - pied in wick - ed - ness with e - vil - do - ers.

II But my eyes are turned to You, O God; in You I take ref - uge.

Strip me not of my life. **C** Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther and

to the Son and to the Ho - ly Spir - it; as it was in

the be - gin - ning, is now, and will be for - ev - er. A - men.

Let my prayer rise be - fore You as in - cense,
the lift-ing up of my hands as the eve-ning sac-ri-fice.

L Let us pray.

Let the incense of our repentant prayer ascend before You, O Lord, and let Your loving-kindness descend on us that, with purified minds, we may sing Your praises with the Church on earth and the whole heavenly host and may glorify You forever.

C Amen.

Sit

Office Hymn: **341 Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates**
(all stanzas)

Readings

Reading

Zephaniah 3:14–20

L A reading from Zephaniah, chapter 3.

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!

¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments against you;
he has cleared away your enemies.

The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall never again fear evil.

¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

“Fear not, O Zion;
let not your hands grow weak.

¹⁷The LORD your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;

he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing.

¹⁸I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival,

so that you will no longer suffer reproach.
¹⁹Behold, at that time I will deal
with all your oppressors.
And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.
²⁰At that time I will bring you in,
at the time when I gather you together;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes," says the LORD.

L O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

L In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.

C **But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.**

Sermon Hymn:

335 O Bride of Christ, Rejoice

(all stanzas)

Sermon

Series: "Our Advent God"

Part 2 of 3: "Rejoicing" (Zephaniah 3:14-20)

Pastor Espinosa

Introduction: The prophetic task in the face of the hated Word of God.

Universal Judgement on Idolatry: Romans 1:18

Among us:

1. Power
2. Love
3. Money
4. Success

Part I: The result? Judgement (Judah would go into exile)

Part II: But God doesn't end with that:

1. Zephaniah 3:14 joy will come
2. What is the basis for this rejoicing?

Part III: Our Basis for Rejoicing:

1. Verse 15: What is taken away?
2. Verses 15-16: Fear not!

Part IV: More Rejoicing, but this time God rejoices!

1. Verse 17: God is in our midst
2. Verse 17: He saves
3. Verse 17: He rejoices over you
4. Verse 17: He quiets you by His love

Conclusion: Let us rejoice!

Canticle

Stand

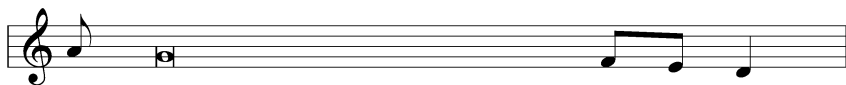
Magnificat

LSB 248

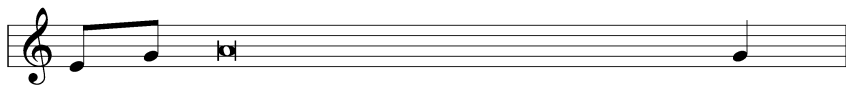
Refrain

My soul mag-ni - fies the Lord, and my spir - it re -
 joic - es in God, my Sav - ior. My soul mag-ni-fies the
 Lord, and my spir - it re - joic - es in God, my Sav - ior.

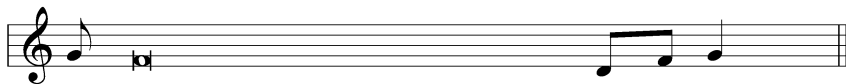
- | | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| 1 For _____ | He has re - | - | - | garded |
| 2 For the | Mighty One | has done | great things to | me, |
| 3 He has | shown strength | with His | arm; | |
| 4 He has | filled the hungry | with good | things, | |
| 5 Glo - ry | be to the Father | and to the | Son | |



1 the lowliness of His hand-maiden.
 2 and holy is His name;
 3 He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
 4 and the rich He has sent empty a - way.
 5 and to the Holy Spirit;



1 For be - hold, from this day
 2 and His mercy is on those who fear Him
 3 He has cast down the mighty from their thrones
 4 He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy
 5 as it was in the be - - - - - ginning,



1 all generations will call me blessed.
 2 from generation to gen - er - ation. *Refrain*
 3 and has exalt - - - - - ed the lowly.
 4 as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for - ever.
 5 is now, and will be forever. A - men. *Refrain*

Sit

Offering

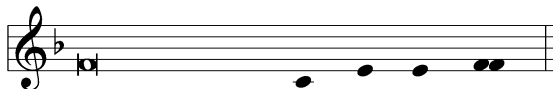
Prayer

Stand

Litany

LSB 249

The congregation's response may begin just as the leader's petition ends so that the word "Lord" is sung simultaneously by both leader and congregation.



L In peace let us pray to the Lord:



C Lord, have mer - cy.

- L** For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** For [*names of synodical and district presidents*], for all pastors in Christ, for all servants of the Church, and for all the people, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** For [*name of president or monarch*], for all public servants, for the government and those who protect us, that they may be upheld and strengthened in every good deed, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** For those who work to bring peace, justice, health, and protection in this and every place, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** For those who bring offerings, those who do good works in this congregation, those who toil, those who sing, and all the people here present who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy, let us pray to the Lord:

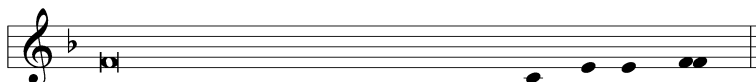
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** For . . . [*additional bids for prayer may be inserted here*] . . . let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

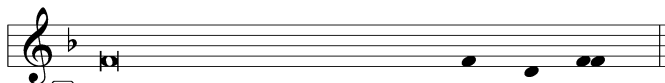
The prayers then continue:



L For the faithful who have gone before us and are with Christ, let us give thanks to the Lord:

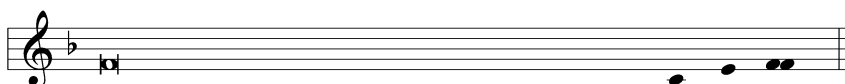


C Al - le - lu - ia.



L Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.

Silence for individual prayer may follow.



L Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ, our Lord:



C To You, O Lord.

Collect for Peace

L O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; 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.

Lord's Prayer

LSB 251

L Taught by our Lord and trusting His promises, we are bold 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.

Benedicamus

LSB 252



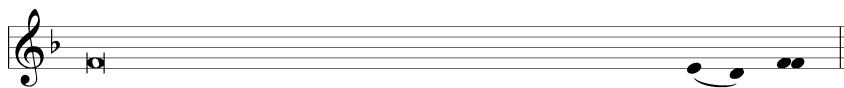
L Let us bless the Lord.



C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

LSB 252



P The almighty and merciful Lord,
the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and pre - serve you.



C A - men.

Closing Hymn:

923 Almighty Father, Bless the Word

(all stanzas)

Postlude

Acknowledgments

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Coming Up:

This Sunday: Fellowship Christmas Brunch – December 21

It's happening **this Sunday after the service**—our annual **Fellowship Christmas Brunch**, and we'd love for you to be part of it! Bring a dish to share **big or small, homemade or store-bought**—we love tasting fun recipes and sharing food together during this joyful season.

This festive potluck is a favorite for a reason! Enjoy a cozy, Christmas-filled atmosphere created by Renee Mott and the Fellowship Team, complete with **Christmas carols**, a **Nativity-themed dramatic play**, and a **photo booth with costumes** for all ages. Come hungry, joyful, and ready to chat!

A sign-up sheet will be available following today's service.

Questions? Talk with Renee or Jackie, or email

office@saintpaulsirvine.com.

Let's celebrate Christmas with full plates, happy hearts, and sweet fellowship! 🌲 ✨

Service Dates to Know

As we *finish celebrating the Advent season and rejoice in the gift of Christ at Christmas*, we warmly invite you to join us for these special worship services. Bring a friend, bring your family, and come celebrate with us as we gather in joy and thanksgiving!

🌟 **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**
Wednesday, December 24 | 7:00 PM

🌲 **Christmas Day Divine Service**
Thursday, December 25 | 9:30 AM

We look forward to finishing this beautiful season together—
all are welcome!

Christmas Toy Drive – CHOC Children's Hospital

This Advent season, we invite you to help spread Christmas joy to children at **CHOC Orange & CHOC Mission Viejo**. Giving is easy—**in person or online!** **SHOP ONLINE THROUGH DECEMBER 25:**

Donate directly through CHOC's Amazon wish lists using the children's personalized wish lists—an easy way to give right up to Christmas Day.

🎁 **FINAL IN-PERSON TOY DROP-OFF DAY:**

• **Dec 18 (Thurs) | 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.**

Donation details & guidelines:

<https://choc.org/child-life/toy-book-donations/>

If you drop off in person, feel free to send a photo to **office@saintpaulsirvine.com** so we can share in the joy!

Christmas Eve at St. Paul's



A FESTIVAL OF NINE

Lessons & Carols

Wednesday, Dec. 24 – 7:00 pm

St. Paul's Choir, Directed by Mark Howard

Jerry Dahlin, Organ and Piano

Rachel Okonski, Flute

Special Musical Offerings:

An Advent Prelude for Flute and Organ

by Charles Callahan

Once in Royal David's City

Setting by Jeffrey Van

He Whom Shepherds Once Came Praising

Quem Pastores, arr. Carl Heine

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

Huron Carol

Setting by Robert A. Benson, edited by Mark Howard

Peace Came to Earth

Tune: Paul Manz, Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda

Arr: Nancy Raabe

Interested in singing in the choir?

Contact Mark Howard 714.423.6460

markahoward@sbcglobal.net

Midweek Education Initiative Announcement

A major initiative for our congregation is strengthening **midweek education for both men and women**. To help us determine the best time to offer this opportunity, we are conducting a **survey** to choose **one** of the following options:

Thursday Morning

- 7:00–7:30 a.m. — Fellowship
- 7:30 a.m. — 30-minute Divine Service

- 8:00–9:00 a.m. — Bible Study

Wednesday Morning

- 10:00 a.m. — Bible Study

Tuesday Evening

- 6:00 p.m. — Bible Study

Pastor Espinosa will be teaching the Bible Study on Galatians.

Livestream would be available for all bible study options.

If we offer the morning Divine Service, the sermon will be an excerpt from the Confessions, Luther, or Walther. This additional divine service would not be livestreamed, our Sunday (9:30 am) service would continue to be livestreamed.



Giving Made Easy – Try Our New Online Giving Platform!

We've made it fast and easy to support the ministry at Saint Paul's through our new online giving system with Amplify. This secure platform allows you to set up one-time or recurring donations, all from your phone or computer.

You can even choose to give directly to causes close to your heart—like our *Saint*

Paul's Classical Academy Project or our *Mercy Team Ministries*.

Give today by scanning the QR code or visiting:

<https://giving.myamplify.io/app/giving/sain9267562>

Thank you for your continued generosity!