

COME GROW SERVE

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2025

Sixth Sunday of Advent

Welcome to St. Paul's Lutheran Church!

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

*Words printed in **bold** are spoken by all. Visitors are invited to sign the guest registry in the Narthex or fill out a pew card and place it in the offering plate.*

THIS SERVICE IS LIVE STREAMED. TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

GATHERING

WELCOME

PM: Welcome to those who are joining us online. Welcome to worship at St. Paul's!

PRELUDE

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

Gerald Near

The assembly is invited to stand.

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: **And also with you.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: ADVENT 6

L: Each week through Advent, we have have sung an ancient O' Antiphon. The verse for this week contains a multiplicity of images: longed-for ruler, uniting cornerstone, creating potter. This is no ordinary king: he is unifier, fashioner, hearts' desire. This antiphon calls on a ruler who is not simply capable, but who is the place where our panting souls can finally rest.

L: As we light the Advent candles, we call upon Christ, the King of the Nations. Christ, arbitrate for our divided nations.

All: **Let swords be beaten into plowshares.**

L: Let no one learn war anymore.

All: **Come quickly to us, Christ Jesus.**

Candle is lit while all sing

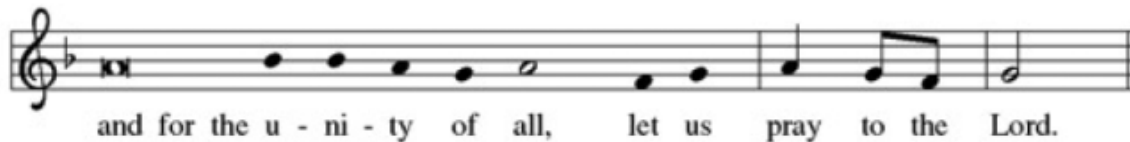
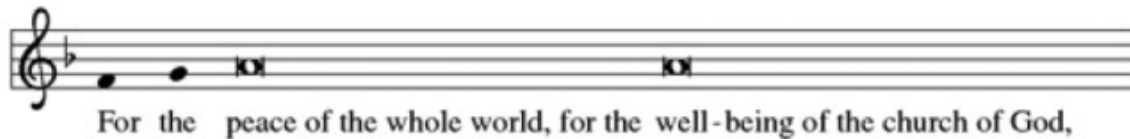
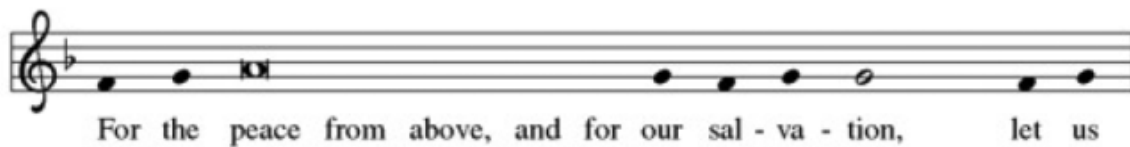
O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you O Israel.

L: Let us pray.

O King of the nations, the ruler they long for, the cornerstone uniting all people: come and save us
all, whom you formed out of clay.

All: Amen.

Kyrie



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,
 let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.
 Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.
 A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A: Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All: Amen.

The assembly is invited to be seated.

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

A reading from Isaiah.

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
 the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
 like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly
 and rejoice with joy and shouting.
 The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
 the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
 They shall see the glory of the LORD,
 the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands
 and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
 "Be strong, do not fear!
 Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
 with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

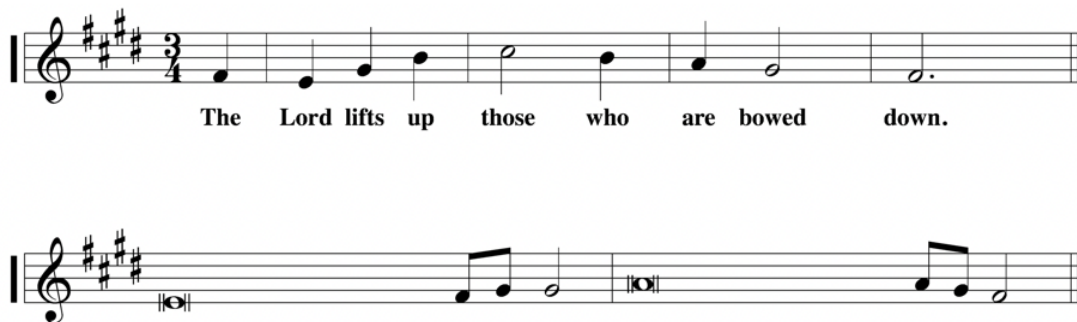
⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;
⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God’s people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Word of God. Word of Life.

All: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 146:5-10



⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob | for their help,
whose hope is in the | LORD their God;
⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that | is in them;**
who keeps promis- | es forever;
⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to | those who hunger.
The LORD sets the | captive free.
⁸ **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who | are bowed down;**

the LORD | loves the righteous. R

⁹The LORD cares | for the stranger;
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way | of the wicked.

¹⁰**The LORD shall | reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. | Hallelujah! R**

SECOND READING: JAMES 5:7-10

A reading from the Letter of James.

⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Word of God. Word of Life.

All: Thanks be to God.

The assembly is invited to stand for the reading of the Gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



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

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

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

Repeat alleluia

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the

wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

SERMON

Pr. Julie Boleyn

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

On Jordan's Bank, The Baptist's Cry

ELW 249

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

PM: In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

PM: God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

A: When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

PM: When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

A: When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

PM: When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant. God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

A: As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith, especially Linda Dunn and Earl Pederson. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

PM: Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

All: Amen.

PEACE

PM: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: And also with you.

The assembly is invited to be seated.

THE OFFERING

An offering is gathered and the Table is set.

Please place pledge cards in the offering plate.

MUSICAL OFFERING

People Get Ready

Curtis Mayfield

Libby Harrison, soprano; Micholas Marotta, mezzo-soprano

Please stand as you are able.

OFFERING PRAYER

A: Let us pray.

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

All: Amen

MEAL

P: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

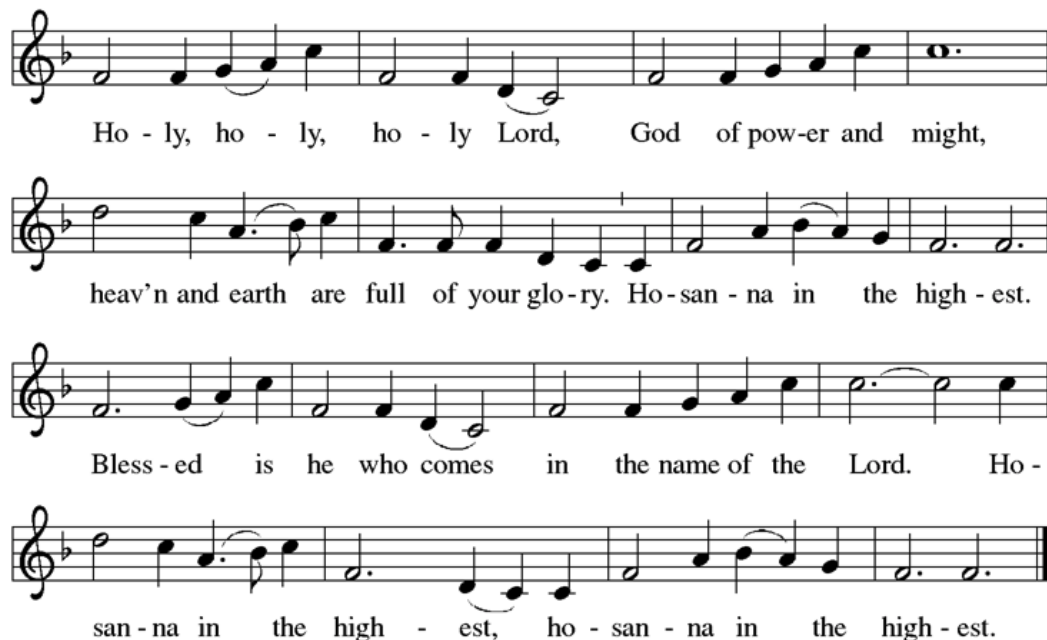
All: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy



P: Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

All creation sings your praise. Sun, moon, and stars reflect your glory. Mountains, lakes, and forests declare your wonders. With Sarah and Abraham we go out in faith, trusting your promise. With Miriam and Moses we celebrate our deliverance from bondage. With Naomi and Ruth we bind ourselves together in covenant love. With Jonathan and David we delight in the gift of deep and abiding friendship. With Mary and Elizabeth we welcome your presence in the birth of Jesus, the Holy One. With Lazarus, Martha, and Mary we give thanks for the blessings of family. With disciples and followers we marvel at the reign of God come near. With saints through the ages we ponder the mystery of Christ's dying and rising.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

With hearts full of memories and hopes, we break this bread and share this cup, remembering the death and resurrection of Christ, and his promise to be with us always as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P: Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts, which we are about to receive from your bounty. Bless our table and the feast we share. Bless us with gladness of heart. Come, Holy Spirit.

All: Come, Holy Spirit.

P: At this table make us your body. Form us to be people of justice and peace. Fill us with gratitude and generosity that we may bear the fruit of love in word and deed. Come, Holy Spirit.

All: Come, Holy Spirit.

P: Praise to you, Author of creation. Praise to you, O Beloved One. Praise to you, O Giver of all good things. Praise to you, blessed and holy Trinity, one God, now and forever.

All: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Together as one body, we pray the prayer Jesus taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNE

P: Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

Please be seated.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you

take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMN

People Look East

ELW 248

Please stand as you are able.

TABLE BLESSING

P: Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into your heart, your mind, and your body to heal your wounds and, through your healing to all the earth. In Jesus' name,

All: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: Let us pray.

God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

SENDING

Please be seated for the announcements.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly is invited to stand.

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

All: Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Awake! Awake, and Great the New Morn

ELW 242

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Keep awake.

All: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry

David P. Dahl

Today is the last day to order poinsettias! See an usher for a form. All dedications will appear in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

THANK YOU

To our musicians: Libby Harrison, soprano; Nicholas Marotta, mezzo-soprano.

To Diane DiFrancesco for donating altar flowers to beautify our sanctuary.

To Diane DiFrancesco for hosting coffee fellowship.

To David Foster and Jonas Gonzalez for clearing the snow last week.

PRAYER REQUESTS

For Sue Murphy, as she undergoes chemotherapy for breast cancer.

For Jan Rock, as she recovers from stenoses.

For John Croft, as he mourns the death of his brother-in-law, Earl Pederson.



WELCOME BACK PASTOR JULIE BOLEYN

We are delighted to welcome back to St. Paul's Pr. Julie Boleyn, who will lead us in worship throughout November, Advent, and on Christmas Eve. Pr. Julie is well known and loved by our congregation. For those who know her less well, here is a bit more background:

A long-time member and now alum of St. Paul's, Rev. Julie Boleyn was both married and ordained at our church. She is the Executive Director of the Kaleidoscope Institute, a non-profit that works with churches across the country as they seek to welcome diversity and creatively imagine new ways of being the church. From 2011 to 2021, she served as pastor at Unity Lutheran of Berwyn. During that time, Pr. Julie led the founding of Awake, activating community members across cultures to work for leadership, justice, and relationship. She also led the founding of Project 88 Music Academy, offering children in the community a way to engage classical music at a high level. Additionally, she accompanied the development of Unidad, a Spanish Language mission development that serves the LGBTQ community. Pr. Julie lives in Berwyn with two other St. Paul's alums: (1) her spouse, Rev. Jeannie Reardon, who serves as interim pastor at United in Faith Lutheran Church; and (2) their 16-year-old child, Maddie (they/them pronouns), who delights in writing children's storybooks, sewing, and cooking.