

December 20, 2023
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
625 W. Gibson Road, Woodland, CA
Rev. David Hardin, Pastor Phone 662-1935
Pianist: Lori Carter

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 3
VESPERS

OUR PEACE RESTS ON HIM ALONE

During one of the busiest and most stressful times of the year, we pause this third week of Advent and consider the source of real and abiding peace. This harmony with both God and others comes to us neither through our exertions of control nor through our best-laid plans, but through the reign of our Mighty God come near to us in Jesus, His one and only Son. The fulfillment of our everlasting Father's perfectly executed plan to save the world is revealed to us in the straw of the Bethlehem manger and then, some thirty-three years later, in the wood and nails of Calvary's cross. Amid the disorder of our chaotic lives, our Prince of Peace gives us what the world can never give. Let us center our hearts and minds on our Wonderful Counselor, who freely gives His everything so that our peace may rest on Him alone.

WELCOME

HYMN SING

HYMN #818 "In Thee Is Gladness"

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

OPENING SENTENCES

PSALM Psalm 51:15, 70:1

Pastor: O Lord, open my lips

People: and my mouth will declare Your praise.

Pastor: Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

People: make haste to help me, O Lord.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen. Praise to You, O Christ, King who comes to save us.

PSALM Psalm 126; Antiphon: v. 5

Pastor: Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!

People: When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,

Pastor: we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter,

People: and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."

Pastor: The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad. Restore our fortunes, O Lord,

People: like streams in the Negeb! Those who sow in tears

Pastor: shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,

People: shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son
 and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the
 beginning, is now, and will be forever.
 Amen.**

**Pastor: Those who sow in tears shall reap with
 shouts of joy!**

HYMN #352 “Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord”

OLD TESTAMENT READING Isaiah 9:1-7

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time He brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time He has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. 2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. 3 You have multiplied the nation; You have increased its joy; they rejoice before You as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. 4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, You have broken as on the day of Midian. 5 For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. (ESV)

Pastor: O Lord, have mercy on us.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE READING Romans 12:9-21

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited. 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” 20 To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (ESV)

Pastor: O Lord, have mercy on us.

People: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORY FOR ADVENT p. 230

Pastor: Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch.

**People: This is the name by which He will be called:
The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

Pastor: In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely.

**People: This is the name by which He will be called:
The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

Pastor: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

**People: This is the name by which He will be called:
The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

HYMN #357 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” v. 1, 6-7

SERMON

ANTIPHON p. 231

Pastor: Let my prayer rise before You as incense,

**People: and the lifting of my hands as the evening
sacrifice.**

MAGNIFICAT p. 231

Pastor: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior;

**People: for He has regarded the lowliness of His
handmaiden.**

Pastor: For behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed.

**People: For the Mighty One has done great things to
me, and holy is His name; and His mercy is
on those who fear Him from generation to
generation. He has shown strength with His
arm;**

Pastor: He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has exalted the lowly.

People: He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away.

Pastor: He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

OFFERING

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

COLLECT

Pastor: O Lord, hear my prayer.

People: And let my cry come to You.

Pastor: Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by the light of Your Holy Word, we may be drawn to Jesus and healed of our brokenness, rejoicing in Him who alone is our peace. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Prince of Peace,

who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All: **Amen.**

Pastor: O Lord, our dwelling place and our peace,
You have compassion on our weakness. Put far
from us all worry and fearfulness that, having
confessed our sins and commending ourselves
to Your gracious mercy, we may, when night
shall come, commit ourselves, our work, and all
we love into Your keeping, receiving from You
the gift of quiet sleep; through Jesus Christ, our
Lord.

People: **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

HYMN #333 “Once He Came in Blessing”

DISMISSAL

Pastor: Go in peace, serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**



Important Dates to Remember

Note the following in your calendars:

Sun. Dec 24 10:30 a.m. Regular Scheduled Sunday Service

Sun. Dec 24 6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

Mon. Dec 25 1 p.m. Christmas Day Service with
Communion